"Where I first learned the nature of care:""1 Women and Violence on the late eighteenth-century frontier.

During the revolutionary war and for some years afterwards the inhabitants of the backcountry settlements in the Ohio Valley were repeatedly the targets of raids by Indians. Accounts of these attacks occasionally appeared in eastern newspapers, detailing the brutality of the "savages" and the effects of their actions on the "defenseless" white women and children caught up in these incidents. A report from Lexington, Kentucky in May 1788 was characteristic of such stories: "On Saturday evening, the 21st instant, some time after night, a party of about seven Indians knocked at the door of widow Shanks (living on Townsend, a branch of Licking) and demanded entrance, which was denied them; they then set fire to the house, and by that means forced the family out, four of which fell a sacrifice to their savage fury, one taken prisoner, the other escaped." The inhabitants of the area set out in pursuit and managed to catch up with the Indians, one of whom they killed, another they wounded, but the rest escaped. The prisoners taken by the Indians had already been "tomahawked" by the time the pursuers reached them.2 Such incidents caused devastation. Families were torn apart, homes destroyed and though some survivors eventually returned to rebuild their lives, others left the area entirely. Many years later, the celebrated travel writer, Mrs. Anne Royall, must surely have spoken for many of the white settlers who, like herself, had experienced an Indian raid, when she declared to her readers that the episode was where she had "first learned the nature of care."3

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3 Royall, Mrs. Royall's Pennsylvania, II, p. 37.
While newsworthy and potentially catastrophic for those involved, the destruction of a frontier settlement was not an unusual occurrence in the late eighteenth century. As white settlers encroached on Indian hunting grounds in the years after 1763, the trans-Appalachian region became a fiercely disputed area. Inter-colonial conflicts and power struggles between Britain and her colonies formed the backdrop to brutal clashes between the Indian peoples and white settlers for control of the land. Settlers lived in a situation where violence or the threat of it was constantly present. Nor was it just men who were caught up in this strife. Women and children lived alongside them and experienced the same disruption, distress, and violence. For these settlements were family enterprises and women's involvement was crucial to their success. As wives, mothers, and daughters white women acted as partners in clearing the land and establishing homesteads on the frontier, but they also played an indispensable part in protecting their homes and families when they came under attack. While women only appeared as shadowy figures in the newspaper accounts of these raids, an exploration of surviving sources suggests that like their men they often "behaved brave" and their actions and behavior enabled their families to survive. There are even sources that suggest many of these frontier "heroines" took the initiative and fought back against the Indians.

Despite a growing body of scholarship on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in the late eighteenth century, there has been little that has focused specifically on the experience of the white women who helped to establish settlements in this area. Nor

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5 Interview with George Edgington, West Liberty, Virginia, 1845, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 98, Draper Manuscripts (Microfilm edition), State Historical Society of Wisconsin (hereafter Draper Ms.); Interview with Mrs. Sophonia Clark, October 1845, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 258, Draper Ms.
have historians considered in any detail the impact on these women of living in what was effectively a war zone.⁶ A tension exists, however, in the portrayal of white women in the sources – between the one-dimensional victim of the newspaper accounts, and the larger than life frontier heroine of the memoirs and oral histories. This paper aims to explore how these disparities arose, but also what the sources tell us about the ways in which white women reacted to the conditions in which they lived and their responses to the frequent Indian raids they endured. It will also examine the effect that the constant fear of Indian raids could have on the way in which women perceived their role and the expectations that their communities had of them.

Concentrating on those women who settled in the Trans-Appalachian area during the decades of the American Revolution and its immediate aftermath, this paper argues that far from being passive victims in these encounters with Indians, white women were frequently fully prepared and willing to fight back. As a result, influenced by the violence and hardship that they faced, these women crafted roles for themselves, which while sharing similarities to those women adopted in more settled parts of the country, were often perceived as distinctively different.

* * *

Those colonists who made the decision to settle in the backcountries of Pennsylvania, Virginia and the Carolinas cannot have been unaware of the difficulties or dangers. Establishing a homestead in this region involved many uncertainties, but among the most pressing were concerns about the proximity of Indians and what many white settlers understood as their “uncivilized” nature. Reports of encounters

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⁶ A number of historians recognize the importance of women on the frontier during this period, but have not explored their experience in depth. See for instance, Rohrbough, Trans-Appalachian Frontier; Friend, Kentucke's Frontier; Ellen Eslinger, ed., Running Mad for Kentucky: Frontier Travel Accounts (Lexington, KY, 2004), pp. 1-66; Margaret Ripley Wolfe, "Fallen Leaves and Missing Pages: Women in Kentucky History," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 90 (1992), pp. 64-89.
with Indians during the numerous wars and skirmishes which culminated in the Seven
Years' War had taught the colonists to be afraid of them and to perceive the Native
Americans as exceptionally savage.7 In the event, such fears proved little deterrent
for the urge to acquire land on which to settle was far more powerful. The end of the
Seven Years' War seemed to open up new opportunities in areas which had until then
been under the control of the French.

Initially incursions into the Trans-Appalachian region were made by men alone,
but from the late 1770s onwards most European settlers came in family and kinship
groups. The nature of the frontier enterprise involved settling on the land and
improving it, and its success required the contributions of all family members –
women and children as well as men. But although historians have recognized that this
was the pattern both in the early years of settlement in New England and in the later
waves of westward migration, the involvement of white women in this first American
West has been less well studied.8 In large part this is because the sources for
accessing women's voices in this period are much rarer than for the later period.
Moreover, many of the sources which do exist can be problematic, for they were
collected in the mid-nineteenth century and therefore reflect the values and outlook of
that time.

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Very few diaries, journals, or letters written by women have survived and are available to the historian of the eighteenth century frontier, and where they do exist they were produced by elite women. The majority of white women of this period were either illiterate or have left no written records of their own. A number of historians have discovered, however, that there are rich sources available in the interviews and written correspondence with elderly pioneers – women as well as men – recorded by collectors such as John Shane and Lyman Draper.\(^9\) These are extremely valuable in helping to reconstruct the experiences of women, but they have some limitations. Both men carried out their interviews with the early settlers in the mid-nineteenth century many years after the episodes they recorded. Some involved the children of these pioneers who were very young at the time of the incidents they spoke about, and frequently reported the stories their parents or other adults had told them rather than their own experiences. In both cases memories were often distorted by time and influenced by contemporary ideas and preoccupations. This is particularly true of the way in which encounters with Native Americans were portrayed in the interviews. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, many white Americans had ceased to recognize any differences in the experiences of the Indian peoples during the Revolution. As Colin Calloway has argued, their agency became subsumed into a single story: "While embattled patriots fought for freedom against a tyrannical monarch in the East, 'merciless savages' ravaged American settlements in the West."\(^{10}\) As a consequence, in recounting their experiences, those interviewed tended to depict the Indians as wooden stereotypes, motivated only by "savagery."

\(^9\) Perkins, *Border Life*.

Nor was Lyman Draper especially interested in the female contribution to the settlement of the West. His main aim in conducting the interviews and correspondence was to find out more about male frontier heroes, and military expeditions and battles. His purpose was to collect materials for a biography of Daniel Boone and accounts of military leaders and campaigns. For that reason the questions he asked were quite specific in trying to elicit facts and historical detail about the men and events. His respondents' answers were not always as precise, and occasionally provided considerable insights into other aspects of frontier life. A question about Daniel Boone's expeditions, for instance, might provide information about his wife's reluctance to move to a new frontier area, revealing female concerns alongside those of the male subjects of enquiry.¹¹

While John Shane encouraged his informants to talk more freely about their experiences, like other oral histories the recollections no more reflect the lives of all settlers than do the written sources. These sources have to be treated with care, and a consideration given to the time which had elapsed since the remembered episodes and to the age of the person when the incidents took place. The intervening years also produced distortions. Not only had the responsibility for the violence which took place on the frontier during the Revolution been attributed fully to the Indians and their British allies, but women's memories were shaped by more recent influences.¹² Many of their experiences were filtered through mid-nineteenth century ideas about what might be judged appropriate behavior for "civilized" white women. Although


there are questions about their "authenticity" and their purpose, the materials collected by Draper, Shane and other mid-nineteenth century collectors provide valuable insights into women's experiences. Together with memoirs written long after the frontier had become settled, contemporary newspaper accounts, and the fragments left by women themselves, these materials can help to reconstruct women's lives in this period.

The women who took part in the migration to the Trans-Appalachian west were influenced by contemporary ideas about the gendered division of labor and the appropriate behavior of both sexes in a civilized society. Frequently such ideas were qualified in practice by factors such as class and race, but they were also affected by the degree to which a region had been settled by whites. In the more settled regions, as families became more stable and communities better established, gender conventions underwent a period of transition. Increasingly society put a greater emphasis on women's role in the home and family rather than on her economic contribution.\(^{13}\) By the mid-eighteenth century the majority of white women defined their place by what Mary Beth Norton has called "the small circle of domestic concerns." This might have varied according to the economic circumstances of the family and by the household's geographical location, but it essentially meant that women's work encompassed domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and childcare, as well as some of the lighter work around the house and farm.\(^{14}\) Many


farmwives also produced commodities for the market and engaged in what were often
domestic and female networks of trade. The increasing emphasis put on women's domesticity and
on the production of food and clothing for their families, meant that such work could
be invisible even though it frequently made a significant contribution to the family
economy.  

The disruption caused by the Revolution and the warfare it prompted, however,
demonstrated that the trend toward white women's domesticity was not fully
established, even in the more settled areas. During the war men were frequently away
from home, whether in the army or in exile, and in these circumstances women ran
farms and businesses, and endeavored to protect their families and property from the
ravages of the war. Even when they were not directly affected by the fighting, male
leaders encouraged women to produce goods for the war effort, ensuring that they
were involved in the revolutionary struggle. While for the majority of women the
end of the war brought a renewed emphasis on domestic roles, this was not true in all
parts of the new nation. Social expectations of women's roles remained highly
contingent on where women lived and their economic circumstances. Women's
participation in the migration to and settlement in the Trans-Appalachian West
suggests that in this situation female roles were frequently complex and could not
always be strictly defined.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812

15 See for instance, Jeanne Boydston, Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor
in the Early Republic ((New York, 1990); Jeanne Boydston, "The Woman Who Wasn't There:
Women's Market Labor and the Transition to Capitalism in the United States," Journal of the Early
Republic, 16 (Summer 1996), pp. 183-206. Although Boydston's work refers specifically to the Mid-
Atlantic regions, her findings hold true of the rest of the United States, see p. 192. Joan M. Jensen,
Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850 (New Haven, 1986); Lynn Salmon,
Women and the Law of Property in Early America (Chapel Hill, 1986).

16 On women's involvement in the Revolution see: Norton, Liberty's Daughters; Linda Kerber, Women
of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill, 1980); Joan R.
Gundersen, To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill, 2006, first
published 1996), pp. 179-184; Cynthia A. Kierner, Southern Women in Revolution, 1776-1800:
Personal and Political Narratives (Columbia, 1998).
Although many men relied on their wives to ensure the smooth running of their families and households and expected them to give support to ensure the family's economic welfare, this did not accord them a status equal to that of their husbands. Both the law and eighteenth-century society considered women to be the dependents of their husbands. Married women enjoyed no separate legal identity and all property brought to the marriage and earnings for the duration of their married lives became the property of their husbands. In return, a husband's role was to provide for his wife and to protect her. Women continued to be subordinate to their husbands, subject to their economic decisions and with little social expectation that they would be consulted about resolutions to change the family's circumstances, even when that might mean uprooting the family and migrating west.

Most families moved to the frontier regions of Pennsylvania, Virginia and the Carolinas in order to improve their economic fortunes – a concern which most men considered to be the responsibility of the male head of household. For some men western lands were a means to build on existing fortunes, but for men of more limited resources the prospect of new lands to farm was the way to a "modest independence" rather than riches. Many historians have suggested that for women whose worlds were centered more on their homes and the network of family and friends in their neighborhood, the outlook was less alluring for it would mean leaving behind all that was familiar to them. But as men were attracted across the Appalachians, they expected to take their families with them.

17 Marsh, Georgia's Frontier Women, pp. 41-43.
18 Salmon, Women and the Law of Property, pp. 15, 53-57, 200 (n. 1); Kierner, Southern Women in Revolution, p. xxiv. Kierner suggests elsewhere that there were some exceptions to coverture amongst married women who traded as feme sole. See Kierner, Beyond the Household, pp. 17-25.
The decision to remove was a male privilege and many historians have assumed that wives were expected to accept that resolution without question.\textsuperscript{20} Such conclusions might reflect the situation in the mid-nineteenth century, when the perceived danger of attacks from Indians was more remote, but in the late eighteenth century the circumstances were different. While the final choice might not have been a woman's, it is likely that the majority of women had some input into the discussions about the wisdom of such a move. We cannot, for instance, know how many women refused to go west and succeeded in convincing their husbands of the folly of the enterprise. For others, the move west was made reluctantly. It was harder for women than men, when it meant uprooting and leaving behind family, friends, and home.

While women undoubtedly exhibited a wide range of emotions in leaving familiar surroundings and family members, only an articulate few women have left their feelings on record. Annie Christian, for instance, noted her anguish at her husband's decision to move the family to Holston, because it meant leaving her female friends behind. Elizabeth Preston Meredith was still clearer about her feelings. In a letter written to her brother in 1790 as she was about to leave with her husband for Kentucky, she noted both her distress at leaving their mother behind in Virginia, and her fears about the journey and the destination: "I suppose thare never was a person whent to that Country with more reluctance than I shall go god only knoas how whe shall get thare though I am afraid very badly from the manner whe seem to be fixt."\textsuperscript{21} But these views of elite and articulate women do not necessarily reflect the


\textsuperscript{21} Letter from Elizabeth Meredith to John Breckinridge, dated April 1790, volume 6: Dec. 28, 1789-Nov. 11, 1790, Breckinridge Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Letter from Annie Christian to Anne Fleming, dated April 25, 1775, Annie Henry Christian Personal Correspondence, 1770-1787, Bullitt Family Collection, Oxmoor Collection, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.
attitudes of women from more modest backgrounds, who traveled with family members and for whom the prospect of a "modest independence" in the west was possibly more enticing than the struggle to make a living in the east.

The fear of Indian attack both on the outward journey and once settled, was clearly at the forefront of many women's concerns as they prepared to remove to the west. Eastern newspapers frequently reported on what they referred to as Indian outrages on families on the frontier. A report from Charleston, South Carolina printed in the *New York Gazette* in January 1764, for instance, informed its readers of the murder of women and children by Creek Indians and the aftermath of the attack:

> The situation of the poor inhabitants is represented as very deplorable, flying for fear of the savages with only the cloathes on their backs, helpless women and children exposed to all the inclemencies of a vigorous season abandoning their habitations and in want of every conveniency and even necessaries of life.22

Reports of an attack, such as that near Fort Chartres, could only have served to scare women contemplating migrating to the west:

> Six days ago a house thirty yards distant from mine, where only one soldier and his wife were, was attacked by six Indians; the man and woman were tomahawked and scalped, the woman killed on the spot, and the man, whose scull was broke, has been trepanned, but it is supposed will follow his mate.

Nor did Indian "atrocities" disappear from the pages of the newspapers as white armies fought each other in the east. Thus, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* described an incident at Fort Stanwix:

> Yesterday the garrison was alarmed by the firing of four guns, when a party were immediately sent out to the place, which was about 500 yards from the fort; but the villains were fled, having shot, scalped and tomahawked two girls, and wounded a third. The girls had been out gathering raspberries.23

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These reports were a persistent feature of eastern newspapers in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Often they were printed as an implicit criticism of political leaders, but they helped to create what Peter Silver has called an "anti-Indian sublime." As such, the almost formulaic descriptions of sudden attacks and mutilated bodies portrayed the Indians as universally savage and untrustworthy. Moreover, by depicting attacks on women as they were going about their "civilized" domestic tasks, they served to emphasize further the "uncivilized" character of the Indians. While newspaper editors and political writers often had ulterior motives in publishing such tales of atrocity, it is likely that the largely uneducated women to whom such reports were relayed would have understood them at their face value. By depicting white women and children as the victims in these violent incidents, these accounts contributed to the general fear and anxiety women had of the move west.

The fearfulness generated by reports of atrocities could prove a powerful argument against migration for women reluctant to leave their homes in the east. Some women simply refused to leave until the danger from the Indian wars had passed, to the frustration of their husbands. As Thomas Hart remarked in August 1780, "I am now living at my plantation. I know not whether I shall ever be able to prevail on my wife to leave it, the damage done by the Indians with this year has set her more against than ever, however upon a peace with Britain, I shall expect a change in the savages and I think it is in vain to hope for it soon…" Another thwarted settler, John Donaldson, affirmed: "But as I observed to you my family will

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not consent to go out as far as the thought of the Indians is a terror[?] to some of them. So that if I cannot git land in the settlement they will not agree to go with me there."26

Although some wives were discouraged by their fears, there were many who persisted. As the Indian agent and land speculator, George Croghan reported in late 1770, their numbers were significant: "Last year, I am sure, there were between four and five thousand and all this spring and summer the roads have been lined with wagons moving to the Ohio."27 By 1775 an estimated fifty thousand Europeans lived to the west of the Appalachians and their numbers continued to grow.28 The persistent stream of migrants westwards suggests that, for many, the threat from the Indians was not a powerful enough discouragement. However, once the journey west began, such fears proved to be well-founded.

Newspaper reports and letters from those who had already made the journey, warned migrants of the risks they faced from Indian attacks, both along the route and after settlement. In these circumstances, a woman could no longer play a reluctant or even passive part in the enterprise, for to do so would put her and her family in danger. Few contemporary accounts, however, placed any emphasis on women’s roles in such incidents. As a consequence any female agency in the face of an Indian attack remained invisible or unacknowledged as military leaders, male petitioners, and newspaper reports maintained a fiction that women were defenseless without male protection. Where women appeared in the accounts of Indian attacks it was only as the innocent victims of the Indians – their role in these reports was to emphasize

26 Letter from John Donaldson, dated Bourbon County, April 22, 1797, E. P. Johnson Papers, Reel 13, Shane Collection.
Indian "savagery" and "brutality", in order to persuade the authorities to take action against them. But whereas contemporary narratives downplayed women's active involvement, the memoirs of pioneers and the Draper and Shane interviews indicate a rather different story. Instead of being helpless victims, these later accounts reveal that the female members of the parties who migrated across the Appalachians played a far more active part in the face of Indian attacks.

The journey west proved the first testing ground for women and their families, as a new sense of priorities replaced the gendered divisions of labor generally prevalent on the eastern seaboard. Both the unpredictability of the trip itself and the perils faced along the way, meant that women were unable to adhere to any rigid interpretation of what their role should be. While other destinations presented their own difficulties, the route to Kentucky was particularly grueling and fraught with danger, whether the migrants went via the Wilderness Road or by water along the Ohio River. The terrain crossing the mountains was treacherous, but the river journey was little safer for there were fallen trees and other debris beneath the water which could capsize or even sink flatboats making navigation hazardous. Low water could also prove perilous since boats might run aground, as Mary Dewees found on her journey down the Ohio in 1788: "Nov' 20 Just as the day broke, got aground on a Sandbar, at the beach Bottom." Her unease was heightened by the fear of Indians, as she noted: "Just at that time a small Kentucky Boat that was ashore, endeavoured to

alarm us by firing of a gun and Accosting us in the Indian tongue. But our people could just discern the boat, which quieted our fears…“30

Dewees did not encounter any hostile Indians herself nor did she discuss the measures taken to ensure the safety of her party, but her journal reveals the great sense of unease about the proximity of Indians: "...After the wind Abated, we again put out in the Channel and were Obliged again by a fresh gale to put To Shore on the Indian Coast which caused some disagreeable Sensations, as it is not long since the Indians have done some mischief here abouts…”31 Such concerns were echoed in the behavior of other emigrant groups and the memories of those who later recalled the journey. At certain points along both routes, slow moving parties burdened with baggage, livestock and small children were vulnerable to attacks by Indians. As a consequence many families joined with other migrating groups for protection, for it quickly became apparent that smaller groups were easy targets for Indian ambushes. As reports of confrontations became more common, some of the parties became very large, numbering between 300 and 500 men, women, and children.32 Whatever the size of the party, faced with a threat to their survival women as well as men had to be prepared to defend their families.

Some of the memoirs give women a more prominent, active, and even assertive role than the more distant part they play in many of the contemporary published narratives. The more personal nature of these reminiscences helps to explain these rather different characteristics, but so too does the increasing popularity by the mid-

30 Entry for November 20, 1788, "Mrs. Mary Dewees Journal from Philadelphia to Kentucky," Codex 58, Durrett Collection, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago. There is a note at the end of the journal to say that it was given to the copier a few years ago by her uncle and copied in August 1869.
31 Entry for November 20, 1788, "Mary Dewees Journal".
nineteenth century of many published accounts which provided models of heroic frontier pioneers both male and female. Such narratives depicted women as Amazonian figures, fierce in the defense of their families and crucial to the national fight against the Indians. Although such behavior may not have been appropriate for mid-nineteenth century women, these accounts implied that it had been necessary on the frontier where fortitude and even violence were essential in the face of the "savage" Indian.33

Echoes of these popular depictions of the frontier appear in many mid-nineteenth century oral histories and memoirs, giving them a celebratory tone. Thus, some of these later accounts suggested that women might occasionally take the initiative when faced with the threat of an Indian ambush on the road. Daniel Drake's recollections of travelling to Kentucky as a boy related a number of incidents when women's prompt actions proved crucial to the safety of the party. He noted on one occasion: "The heroic presence of mind of a woman saved the party. She broke open a chest in one of the wagons with an axe, got at the ammunition, gave it to the men, and called upon them to fight. This, with the extinction of their camp-fires, led the Indians to retreat."34 In another instance, he emphasized his mother's bravery in an encounter with Indians on the Ohio River, as she ensured that all the men had easy access to the available weapons. While not armed with a gun herself, she proved herself ready to contribute to the defense of the party should it be necessary.35

Other authors recollected the integral part that women took in safeguarding the company. As was appropriate to mid-nineteenth century texts, this was generally

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33 Perkins, Border Life, pp. 142-146; June Namias, White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier (Chapel Hill, 1993), pp. 29-36. Lepore, The Name of War, pp. 186-190, also suggests the way in which memory of past Indian wars could inform contemporary conflicts.


35 Drake, Pioneer Life in Kentucky, p. 251.
under male leadership. When an Indian ambush was feared on the road, women
might join the men and stand sentry all night, armed with pistols: "Then the women
who were armed, as most of them were with pistols, took positions with their
husbands. The balance of the women and children were placed in a position near the
river, supposed to be the safest. And thus arranged, watch was kept up during the
night by sentinels closely posted on the lines soon after dark."36 Though the use of
firearms by women as part of an organized defense strategy is rarely mentioned in
other sources, there is evidence that many women were familiar with and prepared to
use guns. One such was Colonel Whitley's wife who was so determined to be ready
in the event of an Indian attack, one memoir recalled, that she was a better shot than
her husband. When asked how she had learned to shoot so well, she replied: "…she
had learned on purpose in order to kill them [the Indians] should occasion ever make
it necessary."37 While the anecdote emphasized Mrs. Whitley's prowess with a gun
and her hatred of the Indians, it nonetheless suggested that women's use of guns was
not particularly unusual in these circumstances.38 Stories such as this one about Mrs.
Whitley have to be treated cautiously, for they were part of the mid-nineteenth
century myth-making surrounding the frontier which aimed to create female heroines
worthy of their male counterparts. Nonetheless, they still suggest the significant roles
that women played in ensuring the safety of their families.

The importance of being prepared to face all the eventualities of the trail was
brought home to many migrants as they came across the evidence of parties who had
been unable to defend themselves, or who had been caught unprepared. Many of

37 Draper's notes on Colonel Whitley's Narrative, volume 9, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 12, Draper
Ms.
38 Autobiography of Allen Trimble, p. 14. Women are occasionally mentioned as having guns, but it
was rarely commented on, see for instance: Otto R. Rothert, ed., "John Shane's Interview, in 1841, with
Mrs. Wilson of Woodford County," Filson Club Historical Quarterly, (October 1942), p. 228. See the
comments by Elizabeth Perkins in Border Life, pp. 145-146.
those interviewed by Shane and Draper recalled their horror at the fate of these people, echoing many of the newspaper stories of Indian "savagery" of the time. Mrs. Taylor reflected the reactions of many in remembering that she had been "...horrorstruck the next day when they came up to the massacred camp. The dead were buried as well they could, under the circumstances of the case." Others recounted close encounters which but for the vigilance and experience of members of the party might have ended in disaster. Mrs. Shanklin recalled: "...my mother saw an Indian, w. big gun raised, ready to fire. She told the Co., & they threw the stern out, so as to get further from shore. The boat was so protected at the sides, that the Indians could not have killed anyone." This was not the only fortunate escape of the day, for later as they thought about camping for the night another woman alerted the party to the danger they were in: "That evening when they landed to stop for the night, they heard ground squirrels, or owls, or wolves, in different parts of a circle rounds. Mrs. Sadowsky, who had been a prisoner among the Indians, knowing the cause of the sounds, they pushed off, & went on." Although such memories may have been embellished over time and focused on the dangers faced by the settlers bringing "civilization" to the west, they give some insight into the experiences of these people. Like the letters and diaries recorded at the time of the journey, they suggest the great uncertainties engendered by the constant fear of Indian attack.

Despite precautions not all parties were successful in avoiding an encounter with the Indians. The continued tensions between settlers and the Indian groups whose

39  Moore's Defeat, October 1784 by Gen. James Taylor for Dr. Draper, volume 9, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, pp. 71-72; Interview with Ben Guthrie, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 253; Interview with James Wade, volume 12, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 12, Draper Ms.
40  Interview with Mrs. Shanklin, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 217, Draper Ms.
41  See for instance, Entry for November 20, 1788, "Mary Dewees Journal"; Letter addressed to Samuel Beale from John May, Kentucky County, dated 15 April 1780, Samuel Beall Papers, Correspondence, 1779-1780, Beall-Booth Family Papers, 1778-1953, Manuscript Collections, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.
lands they sought to take, ensured that such meetings were invariably brutal and resulted in death or injury on both sides. Occasionally both men and women were able to hide and later escape, to be discovered by the next party who passed along the route, but travelers' accounts recorded many instances where no-one from the preceding party had survived an attack.\textsuperscript{42} The reports of such episodes reflected the distress and confusion they caused, as Mrs. Taylor recalled: "The Indians that night rushed on them, killed and scalped the greater part of the party." There were some survivors, though they suffered a different kind of anguish, as she continued: "There was a man & wife who had two children. The woman came to the camp they had passed in the course of the night with an infant in her arms. The other child was killed. The husband took that side of the road leading to Kentucy, and each thought the other & children were killed. The wife with the infant came with the party & found her husband."\textsuperscript{43} This particular incident ended in the reconciliation of the couple but their relief was diminished by the loss of one of their children; others had even less happy endings and surviving family members had to continue their journey alone.

While for many women and their families the journey to the frontier passed without any major incident, most endured hardship and the uncertainty caused by the fear of hostile Indians. Several commented later on their relief at escaping a confrontation, and their dismay at the news of companies of migrants who had been attacked both in front of and following them.\textsuperscript{44} But reaching their destination did not

\textsuperscript{43} Moore's Defeat, October 1784 by Gen. James Taylor for Dr. Draper, volume 9, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, pp. 71-72, Draper Ms.
\textsuperscript{44} Interview with Ben Guthrie, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 253; Interview with Mrs. Hinds, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 5; Interview with Mrs. John Arnold, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 241, Draper Ms.
mean that women could easily return to the familiar roles or assumptions about
gender responsibilities that they had experienced in the east.

The white women who settled in the early Trans-Appalachian west had learned
to believe that the Indians were savage, uncivilized, and untrustworthy even before
they set out. Their experience of the journey west did little to dispel those
assumptions and such perceptions continued to color their understanding of Indians as
they worked with their husbands to establish settlements. Consequently, as their
later recollections show, they tended to expect any encounters with the Indians to be
dangerous. Moreover, the settlers' seizure of Indian lands and the inability of the
British authorities to prevent them from doing so, meant that some Indian leaders
found it extremely difficult to restrain their warriors from reacting. By the outbreak
of the Revolution the situation in this region was extremely volatile.

The Native Americans did not attack American settlements indiscriminately,
although that is the impression given by many of the later recollections by whites. In
attempting to establish themselves in the Trans-Appalachian region, settlers were
encroaching on Indian hunting grounds and interfering with traditional Native
American trading and communications networks. Their actions prompted alarm
among the Indian peoples struggling to maintain control over their lands in the area,
and led to intermittent and brutal clashes. The onset of the Revolution witnessed the
gradual descent of the western region into violence, as shifting alliances and a failure
in state authority led to disorder and lawlessness – a state of affairs which the settlers
had hastened. The situation was exacerbated as some Indians saw the Revolution as
an opportunity to regain their lands and their determination coincided with the goals

of the British in the Trans-Appalachian region. These years saw escalating bloodshed, as settlers occasionally took matters into their own hands and the Indians retaliated in kind. As a result, many of the white women who settled in these western regions found themselves facing Indian raids in which they as much as their men were the intended targets.48 Until settlements were well-established and peace treaties with the Indians had been agreed and honored on both sides – a situation which was not achieved until at least a decade after the end of the Revolution – the likelihood of an Indian attack remained high. As a consequence, women had to be continually on the alert for danger and, as had been the case on the journey west, the defense of the family remained the concern of both sexes.

The emphasis placed by most migrants on establishing their own homestead and cultivating their own fields, had the consequence that they often did not live in close proximity to their neighbors. This meant that although in general terms the defense of the frontier relied heavily on the local militia and on fortified stations or forts to which inhabitants could retreat when an attack threatened, this was not always practical.49 Individuals, women as well as men, had to remain watchful and ready to protect their families in the event of a raid. For the nature of women's work might leave them isolated and unprotected, so that any idea that women were dependent on men for their protection meant very little. As one woman discovered when she was working alone in her cabin, an Indian attack could come at any time and she had to be ready to defend herself: "A woman was working in a cabin. Indians tried to get in, & she had her washtub behind the door, they could only partly open it & she posted

herself behind the door with an ax, & killed two or three Indians as one by one they pushed themselves in."  

While the story might have been embellished over time, the reality of frontier life was that women were regularly in a position where there were no men to protect them, and consequently they had to be inventive and use their own initiative in order to defend themselves.

Women's duties tended to be centered on the cabin and its immediate vicinity. Once the initial period of settlement when women joined men in the hard physical work of clearing the land, planting crops and constructing a cabin was over, most women attempted to revert to their more traditional tasks as housewives. This was a job made difficult by the more primitive conditions of the western settlements and the limited resources available to them. Besides childcare and the domestic chores of cooking and cleaning, women were responsible for the health of their families. They also routinely undertook duties such as soap making, cheese and butter-making, as well as killing livestock in order to prepare meat for winter. Milking and looking after the farm animals including the poultry, were also usually female jobs, and frequently too women would have to fetch and carry water for cooking and cleaning.

Women's duties required that they spend a great deal of time at their homestead either alone or with small children. During the day when the men were working in the fields or away on hunting expeditions, they were frequently not within hailing distance. Thus, when an Indian raiding party intent on plunder and frightening the white settlers attacked an isolated settlement, women had to deal with the situation

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50 Interview with Judge Jolly, 1860, volume 9, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 89, Draper Ms.
51 See Friend, *Kentucke's Frontier*, pp. 112-114 for the strains this could put on patriarchy.
52 Drake, *Pioneer Life in Kentucky*, pp. 37, 92-97, 120. This routine of domestic duties was not very different from that in other rural areas, as examined by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives*, and *A Midwife's Tale*. 
alone. Their position was not unique. Women in the more settled areas of the
country faced similar circumstances during the revolutionary war when the hostilities
reached their vicinity. In the absence of their husbands, they occasionally had to
defend themselves and their property against enemy soldiers. While their gender
might provide some protection against rough treatment by British or American
soldiers, this was not always the case. Incidents of rape and murder were not
infrequent. For women in the backcountry, their gender was rarely a safeguard
against attack. Though Indian rites of war inhibited warriors from raping white
women, they had no prohibitions against killing or making them captive.

Both contemporary accounts and later recollections testify to the frequency of
Indian raids on white settlements in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and
often white women were at the center of these reports. The representation of the role
these women played varied, however. One Pennsylvania newspaper report in 1779
suggested that the occasional brave woman might defend herself against an attack
with considerable force: "We have certain accounts here of a woman on Cheat River
killing one Indian, wounding another with a broad ax, and making her escape." News of this nature was unusual, for contemporary newspaper editors did not
habitually recount episodes in which women acted in such a dynamic manner against
an Indian foe. Generally they were more concerned to portray white women as the
innocent victims of the Indians, seized, or killed and scalped, rather than taking
matters into their own hands. For by doing so, the newspaper accounts helped to
reinforce the idea that only by defending the frontier settlements with an army or

53 S. P. Hildreth, M.D., History of the Belville Settlement, (Cincinnati, 1839), pp. 31, 56-57. Interview
with Mrs. Thomas Eaton, daughter of William Steward, Volume 5, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 89,
Draper Ms.
54 Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 202-209; Gundersen, To Be Useful to the World, pp. 154-158;
Kierner, Southern Women in Revolution, pp. 9, 18; Marsh, Georgia's Frontier Women, pp. 181-182.
militia, could American women be spared from the savagery of the Indians. But while women's agency was often invisible in public accounts, an occasional report indicated that these women were not passive, but were ready and able to defend themselves when necessity demanded it.57

The interviews recorded in the mid-nineteenth century also suggest the more active part played by these women in the face of an Indian raid. The testimonies are full of examples of women who were quick to improvise in a situation where they or their family understood themselves to be in danger and who showed their initiative by using anything that was to hand as a weapon. Mrs. Grantz, for instance, was boiling soap at her cabin and watching so that it would not boil over when an Indian party accosted her, as Colonel Graves recalled: "The 1st that she knew that there was any one about, an Indian took her by the arm. She dipped up a gourd full of hot soap &\textasciitilde;, dashing it in his face. The violent screaming of the Indian frightened the others, some ½ dozen, at the door, & they ran. She then took up the axe & dispatched him…”58 Similarly a group of Indians attempted to capture Mrs. Carpenter: "…Mrs. Carpenter, was once out hoeing in her field, when some Indians laid down their guns & went to catch her – she ran & she wielded her hoe as to keep them at bay till she got into the fort.”59 Such recollections emphasized the quick thinking and improvisation of the women involved, which allowed them to evade the fate of others who did not have such fast reactions. The example of John Van Meter's daughters might have had a salutary effect at the time on those who heard about it. They had had their sun bonnets on when they were washing clothes at the spring and they "did not observe

58 Interview with Col. Graves, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 121, Draper Ms.
59 Interview with Joseph Cox, volume 16, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 283, Draper Ms. Story related by Judge Jolly, volume 9, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 89, Draper Ms.
the Indians till they came up & tomahawked them – one killed on the spot, but
Hannah was left dead, & crawled under a log, was found there & died that night."\(^{60}\)
The stories consistently emphasized the bravery of the white women concerned in the
face of attack. By contrast, the Indians were portrayed as cowardly and one-
dimensional, their motives unquestionably dishonorable. But while the recollections
might endow their female protagonists with more courage than was perhaps the
reality, they indicate their resourcefulness prompted by the circumstances they found
themselves in.

If many of the accounts of Indian raids pointed to the fortitude of women left
alone to face their foes, others suggested that even when their husbands were present
wives and daughters played a full part in the defense of the family. Attacks
sometimes occurred at night or early in the morning when all the family were at
home, but were often unprepared for such an eventuality. This was the misfortune of
the Henry family, as Arthur Campbell reported to William Preston in 1774: "Henry
was standing in his door, when the Indians fired at him, his wife and children was in
bed." He did not stay to defend his family, however, but ran to the woods leaving his
family to their fate.\(^{61}\) John Henry's actions were not as cowardly as they might at first
have appeared, for he had been wounded and Campbell hinted that he had gone to
seek help, but a number of other accounts suggest that in similar circumstances
women were as likely to defend their families as their husbands.\(^{62}\) One chronicler
even noted, with disapproval, that some women seemed more willing to stand their
ground than their husbands: "He instantly screamed out, 'the Indians are upon us!' and

\(^{60}\) Interview with Isaac Hedges, volume 9, Draper's Notes, Series S, pp. 136-137, Draper Ms.
\(^{61}\) Letter from Arthur Campbell to William Preston, dated Royal Oak, Sept. 9, 1774, volume 3, Preston
Papers, Series QQ, p. 58, Draper Ms.
\(^{62}\) Samuel G. Drake, *Eighth Thousand Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam* (Auburn and Buffalo,
August, 1769.
instead of returning to the house to defend his wife and children, as any brave man would have done, he rushed down the bank to a canoe he had fastened there, and jumped in." His wife and daughter were of much sterner resolve, for: "In the meantime, Mrs. Armstrong had risen, and with the aid of her daughter Peggy, about eighteen years old, had pushed to the open door, and secured it with a stout oaken bar."  

The escalating violence in the Trans-Appalachian region during the 1780s meant that, if white families were to remain in their homes rather than withdraw to a fort they had to be ready to defend themselves and develop strategies to protect their families. As a consequence women profited from their own experience and that of other settlers, rather than relying on luck. Many undertook certain precautions to enable them to continue with their domestic tasks. One woman named Molly Hancock carried an iron pan handle five or six feet long as a weapon at all times; even sleeping with it at her side in case of a surprise attack. Others learned how to use firearms or axes, and kept these to hand in case of need. But some of the Draper interviews suggest that other women were less willing to rely only on their own resources. Filtered through a mid-nineteenth century lens, Mary Smith had a clear sense of appropriate gender roles in the division of labor. She remembered the insistence of the women she knew that there should be guards on hand to protect them as they went about their daily tasks. While the women milked cows and harvested the crops, the guards were there to warn them when they needed to run for the fort.  

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63 Hildreth, *History of the Belville Settlement*, pp. 56-57. For a similar episode in which a man made good his escape while his wife and children were left to fend for themselves, see: Letter from Thomas Waters to Draper, Lexington, Oct. 23, 1862, volume 13, Daniel Boone Papers, series C, p. 145, Draper Ms.  
64 Volume 11, Draper's notes, p. 100; Benjamin Ethington Interview, volume 13, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 187; Letter from Mary L. Smith, dated December 16, 1844, volume 12, Daniel Boone Papers, Series C, p. 44, Draper Ms.
In circumstances where vigilance was essential to ensure everyone's safety, women as well as men quickly realized that the most immediate form of protection was that afforded by the heavy door of their cabin. The most urgent priority when confronted with a raid was to secure all members of the family in the cabin and to bar the door. Those inside then had to do everything they could to dissuade their attackers from breaking down the door or setting the cabin alight. The story of a Miss Harrison and her friend suggests the difficulties this might present. The two women seemed to be in imminent danger from the Indians, but they were able to lift the puncheon of the cabin floor and hide in a hole underneath it. As the Indians left the house after searching it, they set it on fire, to the distress of "the frightened women [who] could see the fire blazing, through the chinks of the puncheon." Fortunately they were able to take advantage of the smoke "& confusion & the intoxication of the Indians who had by this time become very drunk," to make their escape to the woods. The story emphasized the distress caused by the raid, but it also focused on the white women's bravery, defenseless against the drunken Indians. It implied that while Indians might have once posed a danger, their inherent weaknesses, characterized by their drunkenness, meant that they would inevitably be defeated by the superior white Americans. But while the account reflected mid-nineteenth century concerns, clearly Miss Harrison and her friend had a lucky escape. The consequences of being unprepared or unwilling to defend themselves were only too

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65 Letter from Mrs. Sam Montgomery, Columbia, KY, 1844, volume 11, Daniel Boone Papers, Series C, p. 13, Draper Ms.
66 "Puncheon" were wooden planks made from tree trunks split down the middle, smooth on the side used for flooring but unfinished and rough on the underside.
67 See for instance, Letter from Thomas Waters to Draper, Lexington, October 23, 1862, volume 12, Daniel Boone Papers, Series C, p. 145; Letter from Fanny Young to Draper, dated February 25, 1863, volume 12, Daniel Boone Papers, Series C, p. 154, Draper Ms; Drake, Pioneer Life In Kentucky, p. 249.
obvious – the death, capture or wounding of family members and neighbors were common occurrences.\textsuperscript{69}

Despite the danger this might put them in, most families preferred to remain in their own cabins until the threat from the Indians became so persistent that they had to withdraw to a fort. With their livelihoods tied up in their homesteads, it was easier to defend their property if they lived there. Living in a fort was also very disruptive of family life. Crops could not be sown or looked after, household tasks and domestic production were made much more difficult, and the close living quarters of a fort, particularly in summer, were often unhealthy. This meant that women as well as men were unwilling to abandon their homesteads for the relative safety of a fort.\textsuperscript{70}

At times when the risk of an Indian attack seemed particularly high, women and children would live in the stations or forts. This might mean that they would go out to milk the cows or tend to crops during the day when all seemed quiet, and return to the station at night.\textsuperscript{71} But living in a fort did not obviate the necessity for vigilance on the part of either sex. Incidents related long after the event reveal the tensions between men and women which might occur when necessity required that they should live in a fort for an extended period. A story about Rebecca Boone told by one of the women interviewed by John Shane, reveals how friction might occasionally flare up in the close quarters of a fort. She recalled that Rebecca Boone and her female companions decided one day to remind the men of their responsibilities. They had discovered that


\textsuperscript{71} Interview with Mrs. January, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 221; Interview with John Shryrock, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 17; Interview with Levisa McKinney, volume 9, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, p. 5, Draper Ms.
the men left to guard the fort had been playing ball and sleeping in the fields outside Moore's Station, rather than keeping watch. The women decided to trick the men into believing they were being attacked by Indians, by firing guns on the other side of the fort in the Indian fashion. The resulting fright and confusion as they realized they had been deceived, made the men very angry and they demanded that the women should be whipped.  

Lydia Cruger, who Shane interviewed about an incident at Fort Henry, also suggested that women took their duty of vigilance seriously. The men had become careless, she claimed, had failed to secure the gates to the fort at night and did not see the necessity of standing sentry. The women alerted the commander to the danger the fort was in, but the men laughed at them: "...two or three nights before the attack, two Indians were seen in the fort [by] two or three of the women, who gave intelligence; but the men in the fort scorned at the idea (The women had got up in the night to go out & make water, & came near colliding[?] on them...) The men s'd the women were half blind & couldn't tell in the night an Ind. from a hog & calves etc." The women were vindicated when shortly afterwards some of the settlers were attacked in the fields near the fort and it was surrounded by about three hundred Indians and a company of about fifty Queen's rangers. In hindsight Mrs. Cruger was resentful that the women's warnings had been dismissed so scornfully, but her remarks intimate that in the forts women had a more subordinate part to play than they had in their own cabins. Although these women maintained their vigilance, the episode suggests their powerlessness should the male leaders choose not to heed their warnings.

72 Interview with Mrs. Samuel Scott, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, pp. 225-226, Draper Ms. Perkins, Border Life, pp. 142-144.
73 Interview with Mrs. Lydia Cruger, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 162, Draper Ms.
74 Ibid., pp 162-166.
Men encouraged women's involvement in the defense of their family and community within a fort when necessity demanded it, however. They prepared for an attack by fetching and carrying water into the fort, even when this put them at risk of injury. They also made bullets, sometimes from household goods, loaded muskets, and even shot at the enemy themselves if there were sufficient rifles or muskets. Mrs. Cruger reported that the women were told to chop off the fingers of any Indian found scaling the fort's walls, and others recalled pouring boiling water on their attackers in an attempt to stop their advance.\textsuperscript{75} In these situations women acted as a support for the men, as well as ensuring that small children were kept out of the way and out of danger. Occasional acts of female heroism also punctuated pioneers' memories, but most emphasized the ancillary role that women played to men when a fort was under siege.\textsuperscript{76}

In the event of an attack on their homestead or person, women overcame gendered proscriptions against violence to defend themselves and their families, but they had to be careful not to undermine men's sense of themselves as protectors. As the story of Rebecca Boone suggests, many men believed there should be limits to how far women should be allowed to seize the initiative. The story is overlaid with mid-nineteenth century prescriptions for appropriate male and female roles, but together with other recollections of life in the forts, it suggests that there were spaces where men expected women to remain subservient.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75} Interview with Mrs. Lydia Cruger, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 165; Communication from Mrs. Elizabeth Arnold, 25 June 1845, volume 13, Daniel Boone Papers, Series C, p. 110, Draper Ms.

\textsuperscript{76} The most famous story of female heroism was that of Elizabeth Zane who ran to the blockhouse to fetch powder while the fort was under siege, but other similar stories were also told, and elaborated on. See interview with Jno. Leet, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S; Interview with George Edgington, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 98. Interview with Mrs. Sophonia Clark, volume 2, Draper's Notes, Series S, p. 258, Draper Ms.,– names Molly Scott as the woman performing the feat.

\textsuperscript{77} Friend, \textit{Kentucke's Frontier}, p. 108; Interview with Mrs. Samuel Scott, volume 11, Kentucky Papers, Series CC, pp. 225-226, Draper Ms.
White women's roles in the backcountry communities of this time were undoubtedly shaped by their experience of settling the frontier and dealing with the constant fear and reality of Indian raids. All members of the family had to work together to build, and sometimes rebuild, their homesteads and establish a viable farm to support themselves. Of necessity this meant that distinctions between male and female roles were often blurred, and women had to take on more of the roles associated with men, frequently asserting themselves in order to ensure the safety of their families. They did so with the backing of their communities, building networks of female relatives and neighbors who supported and encouraged them in these new roles, and they were admired for having done so by the pioneers who recalled their experiences many years later.

The nineteenth-century lens through which the white women who settled the Trans-Appalachian frontier are often seen suggests that they were more assertive, and even aggressive, than their counterparts in more settled areas of the country. The part they played during emergencies in defending their homes and families from Indian attacks might support this. But perhaps this role was not so far from those expected of their contemporary eastern counterparts as might be supposed. As a number of scholars have shown, women in other parts of the country had to step outside their usual roles for short periods of time in the face of enemy action or their husbands' absence during the revolutionary wars. Such episodes often taught these women a greater degree of independence and self-esteem than they had enjoyed in their daily lives, but few experienced long term changes in their roles.78 On the frontier these interruptions occurred over much longer periods of time and were driven by an enemy

perceived to be much more savage than the British army. The long term changes were likely to have been more substantial.

Even after peace was finally achieved in this region, it was unlikely that the wives, mothers and daughters who lived there would slip easily into the kind of gendered roles that were coming to be expected in more settled areas. As a consequence, frontier women of the late eighteenth century were often regarded by outsiders as being different from their eastern sisters. Some observers saw these women as vulgar and assertive, as Anne Royall, a woman who had spent her formative years on the frontier, found to her chagrin: "She is said to have been reared among the savages, and she certainly has not done discredit to her tutors." One eastern newspaper editor sneered in 1827. "She retains their rude independence of character, and their scorn for the forms and dandyism of what we are accustomed to call civilized society." 79

This criticism of Anne Royall might have applied equally to many of the other women who experienced the hardship and brutality of the late eighteenth-century frontier. For violence and the fear of violence were an ever-present reality for these women. Reluctant to move into forts except when absolutely necessary, women might find that they were left unprotected and vulnerable as their own duties required them to stay close to home while the men worked at a distance from their homesteads. They had to be constantly vigilant and, when faced with an Indian attack, ever-resourceful, taking the initiative to defend themselves and their children. For failure to assert their "rude independence" could have severe consequences – a reality these women quickly learned through living under the constant threat of an attack by Indians.

79 "Mrs. Royall," Essex Gazette, 28 July 1827.