SSUNS Katarina Jakobsh Salem Village Susanna Cole

In 1643 when the Siwanoy Indians raided my town I was away from the house picking blueberries and watched from the woods while my mother, along with six of my siblings, were brutally murdered. Right after, I was kidnapped and held by the Siwanoy people for several years1.

I hated my captors and their barbaric customs. I clung to the memories of my dear family and especially my mother Anne who bravely fought for religious liberty and against the subordination of women2. If she was strong I could be strong too. For two weeks I would not eat even though Som-kway, their medicine woman, brought me food with her own hand. They tried to make me understand their ways and their language but I refused3. To keep my spirits up I remembered what my mother had done. She had been a midwife supporting women of our village with her skill and encouragement during their labour pains. Many children owed their lives to her. Her work as a midwife earned her many grateful followers and she even hosted weekly gatherings of women in her house to discuss scriptures. But as her popularity grew the male leaders tried to crush her by condemning her. In her trial for heresy she was described as “a woman of ready wit and bold spirit”4. I realized i would try to be the same in my captivity.

Gradually however, I grew to care for my captors, who I began to think of as my friends. I grew to understand they had been cheated of their land by false treaties and oppressed and abused the Dutch settlers. As they realized i was growing more accustomed to them they named me Mee-pahk or “Pretty Leaf”5. I even realize that Som-kway is strong for her people in the same way my mother was strong for her beliefs and the inclusion of women in positions of authority in our religion. I am learning their language and as I understand it, I am understanding them more. Two years later when the Dutch were negotiating peace with the aboriginals they demanded I be 'returned' to my family, and I was sadly forced to leave my friends6.

Despite returning to the remaining members of my family I have remained sympathetic to the plight of Siwanoy and Abenaki, and hope to help them raise concerns through the discussions in Salem. Despite several myths being spread that they are “devil worshipers” they are a powerful population on this land and we should be attempting to ally our lands with them to achieve a greater peace and more protected boarders.

In concern to the soothsayer’s letter, if or when girls in our village begin to develop any symptoms of witchcraft must be treated with respect and given medical attention, like that my mother provided for ailing women in childbirth, and I learned when living with the Indians. We must wait and see what the qwrold gives us, we must remeber to be just and fair, and we must treat all the members of our community as equals before making rush judgements and following our prejudice.

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susanna_Cole>

1. [http://h](http://jistory)istoryofmassachussetts.org/anne-hutchinson/
2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susanna_Cole>
3. <http://www.esthersscrapbook.com/Susanna.html#_ftn2>
4. Ibid
5. [http://h](http://jistory)istoryofmassachussetts.org/anne-hutchinson/