

*The Children's Pocahontas:  
From Gentle Child of the Wild  
to All-American Heroine*

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THE STORY of Pocahontas punctuates the textual and visual imagery of nineteenth-century American children's books. Although she usually received an exciting paragraph or two accompanied by an engraving of her rescuing John Smith at the block, she did not emerge as a full-blown picture-book heroine until the 1850s.<sup>1</sup> Nineteenth-century writers and illustrators recreated Pocahontas to make her an idealized Indian princess whose own story was virtuous and exciting enough to be marketed to the rising generation.<sup>2</sup> From my study of these striking and frequently provocative children's books held at the Ameri-

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1. The best comprehensive analysis to date of the portrayal of Pocahontas in nineteenth-century adult literature is by Robert S. Tilton in his *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapters 2, 3, and 5.

2. I endorse Robert Tilton's opinion on the use of the word 'Indian.' He writes, 'I have used the misnomer "Indians" as my generic locution for Native Americans. Its use in no way endorses the prejudices that the term often implied. This identification simply conforms with the practice of the periods I am discussing and thus avoids confusion.' See *Pocahontas*, 7.

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can Antiquarian Society, I believe that Pocahontas did not step out of the marginal paragraph until she was reconfigured as the nineteenth-century version of the committed Christian, loving wife, and mother. This reconfiguration reached a pivotal point in the 1830s, when the historian George Bancroft and the artist John Gadsby Chapman (who was commissioned by the United States government) highlighted this previously underplayed Christian/maternal aspect of Pocahontas's life. Once her legitimacy as a virtuous daughter, white man's wife, and natural noblewoman was established, juvenile pseudobiographies freely indulged in promoting anecdotes and images emphasizing her initiative, bravery, and exotic earthiness as a forest princess. As a result, Pocahontas emerges as a legendary heroine who both embodies and transcends contemporary cultural boundaries defining the morally pure American lady.

The actual and apparent facts about the real Pocahontas are relatively few and are mostly couched in the self-promoting prose of English adventurer John Smith, who wrote of events that took place between 1607 and 1609 in 1624, long after he had returned to England. However, they reveal the activities of a young woman who willingly traversed two disparate cultures. The loose weave of these assembled facts provides the ideal fabric for the historical embroidery of pseudobiography.<sup>3</sup> Pocahontas was born in about 1595, the daughter of the Pamunkey Chief Powhatan, whose tidewater territory included the area between the Pamunkey River and what is now Richmond, Virginia. According to Smith, the Indian princess blazed into his life as nothing less than a courageous heroine. In 1607, while he was exploring the supposed wilderness, Smith was captured by Powhatan's half-brother Opechancanough and was brought before Powhatan for judgment and sentenced to death. As Smith's head was laid upon the execution stones, Pocahontas physically interceded to stave off his exe-

3. For a capsule bibliography of biographical sources on Pocahontas, see Philip L. Barbour's essay on Pocahontas in *Notable American Women: 1607-1950* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971). For a current survey of primary and secondary sources, see the bibliography compiled by Tilton, *Pocahontas*, 227-43.

cution: 'Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death.'<sup>4</sup> After this romantic and courageous act of rescue, Powhatan declared Smith his friend and released him. Smith writes that once he returned to Jamestown, the Indian princess became a frequent visitor to the struggling colony bringing badly needed food: 'Now ever [*sic*] once in foure or five dayes, Pocahontas with her attendants, brought him so much provision, that saved many of their lives.'<sup>5</sup> Pocahontas's last girlhood adventure with Smith allegedly occurred in 1609, when she was about fourteen years old. In order to warn Smith of her father's plans to attack the colonists, Pocahontas journeyed alone 'in that darke night . . . through the irksome woods.'<sup>6</sup> Shortly thereafter, Smith returned to England, and Pocahontas does not resurface in the historical narrative until several years later.

While visiting tribespeople near the Potomac in 1613, she was lured aboard an English ship by its captain, Samuel Argall, who grasped at the opportunity to level the playing field in the exchange of captives and goods with Powhatan. Argall eventually moored the ship in Jamestown, where the captive Pocahontas enjoyed the apparently benign protection of Sir Thomas Dale, marshal of Virginia. During her captivity, the Indian princess converted to Christianity and was christened Rebecca by the Reverend Alexander Whitaker. Her conversion might have been influenced by a romantic alliance that she developed with John Rolfe, an aspiring tobacco planter. After a brief courtship, Rolfe petitioned Dale for her hand in marriage. The opportunity for speculation is extremely fertile: What role did Rolfe play in her conversion? Did they indeed fall in love with each other? Did Rolfe and Pocahontas view their marriage as a practical means of constructing a lasting peace between their peoples? The couple married in April of 1614, and Thomas, their only child, was born the next

4. John Smith, *Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, Philip L. Barbour, ed. (Williamsburg, Va.: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1986), 2: 151.

5. *Ibid.*, 2: 152.

6. *Ibid.*, 2: 199.

year. Apparently, Powhatan approved of the union, and granted the new couple a tract of land.

In 1616 the couple and their child sailed to England, at the invitation of Thomas Dale. Once in England, the 'Princess Rebecca' was presented to King James I and Queen Anne. She also had her final meeting with John Smith. In his account of this meeting, Smith plays up the event to full dramatic effect, claiming that at first, Pocahontas hid her face and would not speak—perhaps out of shock, since she had been told by the colonists that he was dead. Eventually, she spoke to him, demanding that he recognize her as his daughter, forcefully arguing: 'Were you not afraid to come into my fathers Countrie, and caused feare in him and all his people (but mee) and Feare you here I should call you father; I tell you then I will, and you shall call mee childe, and so I will bee for ever and ever your Countryman.'<sup>7</sup>

With these compelling words, Smith leaves us a final provocative flourish in his portrait of Pocahontas. She died in March of 1617, shortly before she was to sail to Virginia with her husband, who was called back to the colony to serve in his capacity as secretary and recorder. Smith's eulogy of Pocahontas characterizes her as the culturally ideal and truly legitimate liaison between the Indians and the English; he pronounces her 'the first Christian ever of that Nation, the first Virginian ever spake English, or had a childe in mariage by an Englishman.'<sup>8</sup>

Undoubtedly, by Smith's death in 1631, all of the dramatic elements of Pocahontas's brief life—her brave deeds, generosity, conversion, marriage, motherhood, success at court, and early death—and the accompanying cloud of speculative half-truths had been established in the historical record. This intriguing assortment of facts and fiction would provide a fertile field for succeeding generations of writers wishing to amplify various incidents and aspects of her life to fit the cultural demands of the contemporary age.

Through the first four decades of the nineteenth century, his-

7. *Ibid.*, 2: 261.

8. *Ibid.*, 2: 259-60.

torical texts written for American youth portray Pocahontas primarily as the rescuer of Smith—her role is akin to that of a supporting actress to Smith the star. Perhaps the earliest essay expressly on Pocahontas edited for children is ‘The History of Pocahontas,’ an excerpt from the Marquis de Chastellux’s *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782* (1787), which was adapted as a reading lesson by Noah Webster for his *American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking*. Cleansed of a long discussion of Indian savagery, this adaptation appeared as early as 1800, and was reprinted steadily through at least 1813. This version depicts Pocahontas as a twelve-year-old king’s daughter who throws herself on top of Smith to save him from the club—and effectively moves her father with ‘the tears of infancy.’<sup>9</sup> Even with this dramatic act of bravery, Pocahontas slides into the background amid a discussion of Smith’s relations with her father Powhatan until she reappears to save Jamestown from massacre by venturing forth in ‘a terrible storm that kept the savages in their tents’ in order to warn Smith of Powhatan’s plot against the colonists.<sup>10</sup> Pocahontas’s motives in saving Smith and then the colony are not defined. Is she a tender-hearted child? A young woman pulsating with love for Smith? A shrewd and courageous risk taker? In any event, her marriage to John Rolfe is relegated to one line within a description of her captivity by the English: ‘She was treated with great respect and married a planter by the name of Rolfe, who soon after took her to England.’<sup>11</sup> Although she is acclaimed as ‘an example of virtue and piety,’ no mention is made of her conversion, nor of any role played by Rolfe in it.<sup>12</sup>

This rather fuzzy picture of Pocahontas gives few clues to illustrators in their attempts to capture the forest princess in action.<sup>13</sup> Although it is not a children’s book, John Davis’s *Captain*

9. Noah Webster, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking* (New York: G. and R. White, 1801), 95.

10. *Ibid.*, 96.

11. *Ibid.*, 96–97.

12. *Ibid.*, 97.

13. For a fruitful comparison with the closest approximation to historically accurate depictions of sixteenth-century coastal Indians, see John White’s watercolor drawings of

*Smith and Princess Pocahontas* contains an early pictorial image of the rescue scene that exemplifies the contradictory treatment that Pocahontas would receive in children's books later on. First issued in 1805 and reprinted in 1817 and 1836, Davis's text focuses squarely upon Smith for the first quarter of the book. When she appears on page 44, Pocahontas is portrayed as an unabashedly sensual young woman very much in search of an object for her affection. She springs into action as a nubile coquette with 'a bosom just beginning to fill,' who excited by love, wraps her arms about Smith's head, and lays 'her own' upon the stone to receive the club (fig. 1).<sup>14</sup> But what does the frontispiece illustration show? A standing scantily clad young woman, who presses Smith to her chest in a maternal pose. I have searched for a picture among the children's books that comes close to the textual description of the rescue and have yet to find one. Apparently, the image of her lying on top of Smith would be too controversial. Instead, in this picture, Smith looks like a frail boy clinging to his mother. And Pocahontas has the palest complexion of everyone, including Smith—perhaps to underscore her humane innocence? All of the faces visible in this engraving, those of Pocahontas, Powhatan, and John Smith, have the same youthful look to them, and their features are Caucasian, as though the artist could not render Indians. Their costume—Pocahontas's feathers and waist covering, Powhatan's headdress, and Smith's Elizabethan shirt—gives the clearest identification of their roles in the scene. If anything, they look like three teenagers striking a pose for an historical tableau.

Davis's romantic interpretation includes lushly sensual passages in which John Rolfe and Pocahontas (who is led to believe that

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Carolina Algonkians in his *America, 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). According to White's renderings, Algonkian maidens wore an animal skin draped around their waists, and were nude above the waist. Their hair was trussed up in the back, to keep themselves comfortable in summer humidity. I am grateful to Prof. Neal Salisbury for suggesting this valuable source.

14. John Davis, *Captain Smith and Princess Pocahontas* (Philadelphia: Printed for the author [by] T. L. Plowman, 1805), 46-47.

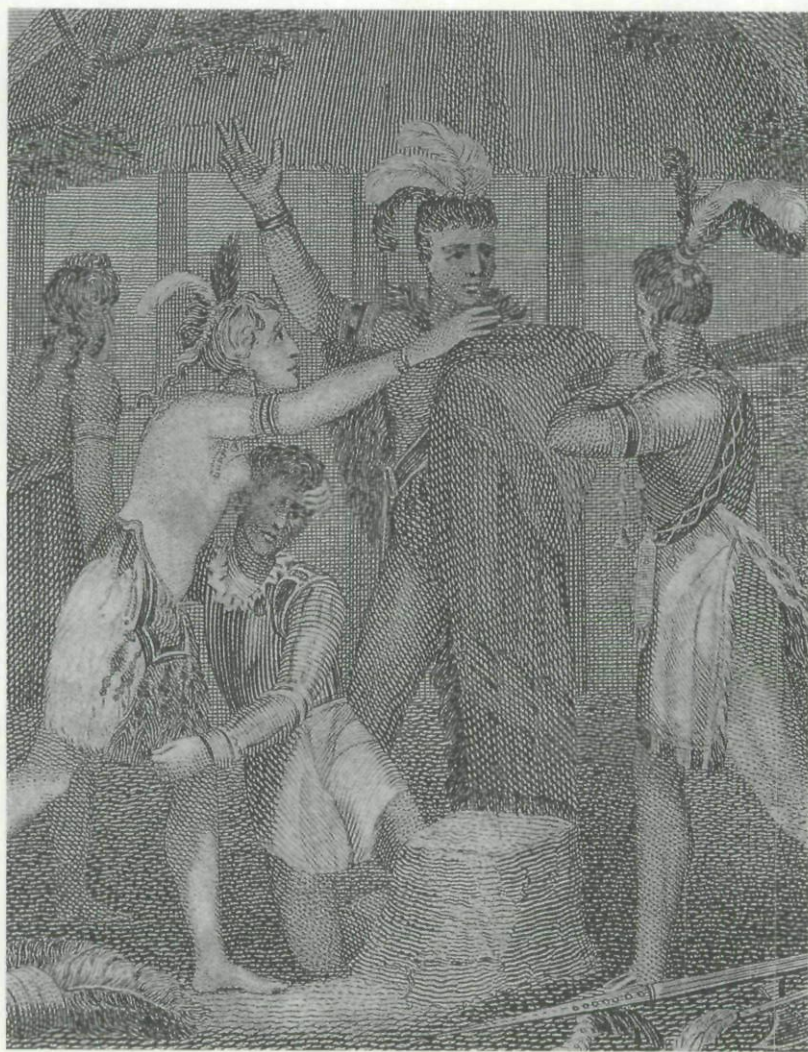


Fig. 1. One of the earliest nineteenth-century interpretations of the rescue scene contains several iconographic elements that would be used by later generations of illustrators. Pocahontas is the only female in the picture, and embodies a sense of humane decency. She holds an outrageously boyish Smith to her chest in a maternal pose. Powhatan resembles a classical hero with his aquiline features, draped cape, and stylized gesture. Metal engraving signed H. A., frontispiece in John Davis, *Captain Smith and Princess Pocahontas* (Philadelphia: T. L. Plowman, 1805).

Smith died) embrace passionately in the Virginia forest: 'He clasped the Indian maid to his beating heart, and drank from her lips the poison of delight.'<sup>15</sup> Here again no mention is made of her conversion or Rolfe's interest in her soul.

The image of Pocahontas as rescuer of John Smith dominated Pocahontas iconography in American children's books through at least 1840. Among the key promoters of this rescue image were the brothers Charles and Samuel Goodrich, who pioneered the writing of American textbooks. Charles Goodrich's *The Child's History of the United States* copyrighted in 1831 provides an extremely childlike version of Pocahontas constructed to inspire virtue in its young readers. In this version Charles Goodrich stresses that a child's actions can make an historical impact (fig. 2). The wood engraving shows Pocahontas as a dark-skinned girl of indeterminate age kneeling before the prostrate Smith, holding his head to her waist in a quasi-pietà pose. She implores her father, who faces her, to put down his club. All of the Indians—including Pocahontas—are similarly garbed, wearing furry robes draped over one shoulder. In contrast, Smith is properly dressed in a nineteenth-century suit, and looks like a Victorian gentleman who got lost in the woods! Pocahontas is the only female in the picture, and she symbolizes a sense of humane decency that is lacking in the execution council surrounding her.

In the text, Pocahontas appears as a plucky child who outruns her sister to stave off Smith's execution. She is depicted as a lovely girl who recognizes bravery and cannot bear to see Smith executed. Moved by his daughter's beauty and courage, Powhatan spares Smith. Charles Goodrich concludes that 'Pocahontas had been brought up among savages; but she had kind feelings, and . . . set a worthy example.'<sup>16</sup> This brief line establishes Pocahontas as a transcendent figure whose inherent goodness both sanctifies and civilizes her; this transcendent image will be revisited by various nineteenth-century writers for children.

15. *Ibid.*, 93.

16. Charles A. Goodrich, *The Child's History of the United States*, seventh edition (Boston: Carter, Hendee & Co., 1835), 23.





Fig. 2. 'Pocahontas saving the life of Capt. Smith.' This wood engraving appears in Charles A. Goodrich, *The Child's History of the United States* (Boston: Carter, Hendee & Co., 1835). Measuring 2 by 3 inches, this engraving was printed from a small woodblock that could easily be inserted with set type on a printing press. This picture is geared to the quick recognition of young children: Pocahontas is drawn as a little girl; all of the Indian men have feathered head-dresses; and Smith looks like an adult nineteenth-century man with his frock coat. This engraving of the rescue scene serves as a visual introduction to the chapter on Indians.

Similarly, Charles's brother Samuel promoted a quasi-childlike image of Pocahontas in the text of his *American Child's History of the United States* (copyright 1865), but the wood-engraved illustrations convey contradictions about her age and sensuality. Once again, Pocahontas is described as a transcendent presence living within the savage culture, but not quite embodying it completely: 'She was twelve years old, and though a king's daughter and a princess, she was dressed in a simple raccoon-skin . . . She had never been taught to read and write, but she was very intelligent.'<sup>17</sup> Goodrich relates Smith's relief to find a feminine oasis of

17. Samuel G. Goodrich, *American Child's Pictorial History of the United States* (Philadelphia: J. H. Butler & Co., 1879; copyright 1865), 69.



Fig. 3. 'Pocahontas Saving the Life of Captain Smith,' from Samuel Goodrich, *Child's Pictorial History of the United States* (Philadelphia: J. H. Butler & Co., 1879; copyright 1865). This mid-nineteenth-century version of the rescue scene clearly shows the influence of artists like George Catlin in shaping white America's perception of the 'classic' Indian. With his long hair and fringed and decorated blanket, Powhatan looks more like a Sioux chief than a Pamunkey sachem. Once again, Pocahontas is the only female in the picture, a nubile young woman begging her father on bended knee while Smith lies behind her; they do not touch. Smith is rendered with some accuracy as a bearded fellow in Elizabethan dress.

compassion: 'Captain Smith was pleased with the kind looks of the beautiful princess, for he was a captive among savages, all of whom were his enemies.'<sup>18</sup> According to the text, Pocahontas shelters Smith with her body while imploring her father to stop the execution (fig. 3). As can be seen in this engraving, Pocahontas is a curvaceous young woman who is nude from the waist up.

18. *Ibid.*

She is shown begging her father on bended knee—she is nowhere near Smith, who lies in back of her. The other illustration of Pocahontas from this history shows Smith making toys for this supposed child princess—but in this picture she appears as a grown matron in a properly long dress that covers her chest, arms, and legs, so that she closely resembles a formally attired nineteenth-century Englishwoman. Within the context of these two ‘before’ and ‘after’ pictures, her mere contact with John Smith inspires her metamorphosis into a ‘proper’ lady.

The best-selling series *Parley's Cabinet Library*, edited by Samuel Goodrich, contains a more sophisticated version of the Pocahontas legend, complete with an adaptation of the only documented likeness made of the living Pocahontas (fig. 4). While the original seventeenth-century metal engraving executed by Simon Van de Passe in 1616 showed her face, upper torso, and right hand, this nineteenth-century wood engraving includes her entire body to reveal an elegant gown worthy of an English noblewoman. Like this picture showing the complete figure of the adult Pocahontas, the text attempts to convey the whole life of the princess. Intended for family reading, this text closely follows the Chastellux account—largely linking Pocahontas's deeds to the career of John Smith—yet it concludes with a tribute to the forest princess that embodies her entire lifespan, not just her role as a youthful rescuer: ‘In whatever light we view her character, either as a maiden, a wife, or a mother, she is equally entitled to our respect and admiration. Heroic and amiable, constant and courageous, humane, generous, discreet and pious, she combined in an extraordinary manner the virtues and perfections of both savage and civilized nature.’<sup>19</sup> This assessment, first published in 1843, reflects a shift in focus from Pocahontas simply as a gutsy Indian maiden to that which accentuated her Christian conversion and especially her marriage to Rolfe. With this reinterpretation, Pocahontas begins to emerge as a truly acceptable heroine for America's young.

19. *Lives of Celebrated Indians* (Boston: Bradbury, Soden & Co., 1843), 189.



Fig. 4. 'Pocahontas in England.' The adult Pocahontas is depicted as the anglicized Lady Rebecca in an elegant Elizabethan gown in *Lives of Celebrated Indians* (Boston: Bradbury, Soden & Co., 1843). Her slightly darkened face is the only clue to her Indian identity. This wood engraving was adapted from Simon Van de Passe's seventeenth-century metal engraving.

This reinterpretation of the children's Pocahontas emerged in a cultural climate influenced by several key historical conditions resounding through antebellum American society. With large-scale industrialization, the development of a cash-based market economy, and the separation of the workplace from the home, gender roles were undergoing a major reconfiguration. Nancy Cott has shown that with this sharper separation of culturally defined male and female roles, women as the chief nurturers of children—the literal future of the republic—gained new roles as the moral conscience of the family and of society.<sup>20</sup> So what better historical example could be found than the first American wife and mother? Furthermore, the legendary Pocahontas had proven herself as a girl/woman moved by innate emotional sensitivity to acts of bravery and benevolence. She was an ideal heroine for the writers of a sentimental fiction that promoted women as creatures inspired to act by the warm sincerity of the heart, not the cool calculation of reason.<sup>21</sup>

Another likely factor in the emergence of Pocahontas as an acceptable heroine for American youth was her status as a Christian convert. The revivals of the Second Great Awakening that swept America during the first four decades of the nineteenth century inspired the conversion of both women and men—and this image of the female convert, coupled with the popularization of woman as the keeper of the moral flame, heightened white America's fascination with Pocahontas the enthusiastic Christian. Both Barbara Epstein and Mary Ryan have studied the impact of these nineteenth-century revivals upon female converts, and have found that evangelical fervor spurred an unprecedented trend among women to work for the promotion of moral reform and conversion.<sup>22</sup> In this context, the legendary Pocahontas is the ideal hero-

20. Nancy Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). See 'Conclusion on "Woman's Sphere" and Feminism,' 197-206.

21. Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), chapter 3: 'Sentimental Culture and the Problem of Fashion.'

22. Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in*

ine, in that her feminine moral sensibility propels her into several exciting adventures to rescue a Christian Englishman from starvation and death and ultimately guides her to accept Christ of her own free will.

This reconfiguration of Pocahontas as Christian wife and mother became a powerful nostalgic symbol in the debate over the proper treatment of the Indian by white America. Roy Harvey Pearce and Lucy Maddox have analyzed the political and literary implications of the white American belief that Indians had to choose between civilization (i.e., assimilation to Christianity and Western European culture), and extinction. In his classic work *Savagism and Civilization*, Pearce makes the perceptive assertion, 'Studying the savage, trying to civilize him, destroying him, in the end they had only studied themselves, strengthened their own civilization, and given those who were coming after them an enlarged certitude of . . . the progress of American civilization over all obstacles.'<sup>23</sup> Pearce traces the appearance of Pocahontas in antebellum dramas and finds that she is characterized as a maiden of exceptional moral sensibility who is set apart from her people by her Christianity.<sup>24</sup> Even with her special status, Pearce observes that she is doomed by her early death, and her 'savage perfection' cannot partake in civilization's progress through her homeland.

In her book *Removals* Lucy Maddox analyzes the political debate over the government-enforced removal of Indian tribes, culminating in the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia in 1838, and the impact made by this debate upon the literary portrayal of the Indian. This debate, coupled with a growing sense of American historical consciousness, made the Indian an icon that could trigger both nostalgia and anxiety. In her study of popular literature, Maddox discovers that 'The fated disappearance of the

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*Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981); Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

23. Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xvii.

24. *Ibid.*, 173-75.

Indians, whether for good or for ill, became an increasingly popular subject in the literary magazines and in schoolbooks between 1830 and 1860.<sup>25</sup> Maddox integrates her analysis of antebellum fiction with observations made by nineteenth-century writers on the supposed realities of Indian life. In 1849 Mary Eastman, an observer of Sioux life, asserted that woman's status epitomized the Indian's uncivilized state: 'A degraded state of woman is universally characteristic of savage life, as her elevated influence in civilized society is the conspicuous standard of moral and social virtue.'<sup>26</sup> If this had been a rule, Pocahontas was an exception from the first. Undoubtedly, Pocahontas symbolizes the essence of idealized Indian civilization. Not only did she embody moral sensibility and conversion to Christianity, but she did so naturally in a long vanished, legendary past.

In 1840 Virginia artist John Gadsby Chapman's painting of *The Baptism of Pocahontas* was first displayed in the Rotunda of the Capitol. Chapman's choice of subject was unique and possibly risky, since up until then the rescue scene dominated Pocahontas iconography. The *Baptism*, with its tranquil mood and staid activity within the confines of a pillared church, was a dramatic departure from the frenzied activity and violence of the rescue. Chapman portrays Pocahontas as a dark-skinned young woman with long straight black hair, clothed in a flowing white dress of English design. Historian Robert Tilton likens this kneeling princess to the Virgin Mary before the manger, and observes that Chapman 'chooses to subordinate his princess to the event being portrayed.'<sup>27</sup> She appears in profile, kneeling before the Reverend Mr. Whitaker, who is shown full-faced, his right hand upon the baptismal font. Governor Thomas Dale is at Whitaker's left, and a sincerely serious John Rolfe is to the right of the convert. Rolfe is dressed in a brown doublet with a white slashed sleeve. Art his-

25. Lucy Maddox, *Removals: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Politics of Indian Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 31.

26. Mary Eastman, *Dacotah: or Life and Legends of the Sioux* (New York: Wiley, 1849), iv-v, as cited by Maddox, *Removals*, 34.

27. Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative*, 112.

torian Vivien Green Fryd notes that the colors of Pocahontas's clothing and hair: 'white, red, and dark brown—are deliberately repeated in the clothing of Whiteaker and Rolfe in order to suggest the Indian princess' affinity with her adopted people.'<sup>28</sup> A few Indians observe the ceremony in the shadowy foreground. The most intent of the Indian guests is Pocahontas's sister, who has brought her infant to the event. Perhaps her 'innate' female sensibility and love for her sister make her sympathetic, but still she is not included within the circle of the baptismal party. Two Indian men, Pocahontas's brother Nantaquas and uncle Opechancanough, deliberately look away, in tacit rejection of their kinswoman's conversion to an alien religion. For Pocahontas's part, her back is turned upon her kin.

Tilton hypothesizes that Chapman chose this heretofore less popular aspect of Pocahontas's life to set his interpretation apart from the existing iconography and bolster his own reputation. Furthermore, Tilton believes that the *Baptism* was 'an attempt to free her from both the standard versions of her own narrative and from what had become standard portrayals of 'her people,' who even in the most well-intentioned pieces were usually depicted as a primitive and dying race.'<sup>29</sup> In addition, Chapman was likely appealing to the sentimental longing for the perfect Indian savage innocent who peacefully and wholly assimilated to white civilization.

As Chapman was idealizing the Christian Pocahontas on canvas, George Bancroft was recasting his Pocahontas to create a thoroughly Christianized and civilized Indian heroine suitable for American youth. Bancroft's *History of the United States* was published in 1834; seven years later his abridged version for youth, *History of the Colonization of the United States*, was issued by the Boston publishing firm of Charles C. Little and James Brown. In this abridged version, publisher's notice states explicitly that 'The object . . . has been to give an authentic account of the coloniza-

28. Vivien Green Fryd, *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the United States Capitol, 1815-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 47. See her discussion of the *Baptism of Pocahontas*, 47-51.

29. Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative*, 120.



tion of the United States, in a simple and continued narrative, adapted to the young.<sup>30</sup> Pocahontas appears in both versions, and a comparison of the texts reveals some significant differences. In the adult version, Pocahontas's rescue of Smith receives its due in the framework of a few lines: she was 'a girl of twelve years old, the daughter of Powhatan, whose confiding fondness Smith had easily won, and who clung firmly to his neck, as his head was bowed down to receive the strokes of the tomahawks.'<sup>31</sup> Essentially, her 'fearlessness' and 'entreaties' saved Smith. The juvenile version endows her with courage and persuasiveness as well, but Bancroft is compelled to add this observation for the reflection of his juvenile audience: 'The gentle feelings of humanity are the same in every race, and in every period of life; they bloom though unconsciously, even in the bosom of a child.'<sup>32</sup> Having established the existence of this goodwill, even in a non-Christian child, Bancroft describes Pocahontas's ongoing acts of charity to the colony: 'The child who had rescued him from death came every few days to the fort, with her "wilde traine of" companions, bringing baskets of corn for the garrison.'<sup>33</sup> Whereas in the adult version the survival of Jamestown had hinged on 'the fortitude of one man,' Bancroft asserts in his juvenile version that Jamestown was saved by 'the fortitude of one man and the benevolence of an Indian girl.'<sup>34</sup> Besides emphasizing a child's power to do good, Bancroft seems to anticipate the Indian maiden's capacity to behave like, and essentially be, a Christian.

The greatest divergence between the two versions lies in Bancroft's treatment of Pocahontas's marriage to John Rolfe. In the earlier adult version, Powhatan's antagonism toward the colonists was converted to goodwill by the almost providential appearance

30. George Bancroft, *History of the Colonization of the United States* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1841), 1: 3.

31. George Bancroft, *A History of the United States, from the Discovery of the American Continent to the Present Time* (Boston: Charles Bowen; London: R. J. Kennett, 1834), 1: 147.

32. Bancroft, *History of the Colonization of the United States*, 1: 67.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, 1: 148; Bancroft, *History of the Colonization of the United States*, 1: 67.

of John Rolfe, 'a young Englishman, [who] winning the favor of Pocahontas, desired her in marriage; and with the favor of Sir Thomas Dale, and to the express delight of the savage chieftain, the nuptials were solemnized according to the rites of the English church.'<sup>35</sup> In this passage Bancroft tidily compresses Pocahontas's conversion and marriage to Rolfe. Note that he does not make direct mention of her conversion nor any possible role that Rolfe had in it.

By the time Bancroft was working on the juvenile abridgment in the late 1830s, the removal of the decidedly undocile Cherokees surely must have inspired the historian to return to the forest princess's conversion and marriage with a new fervor. In this version, the 'honest and discreet' Rolfe becomes 'an amiable enthusiast, who . . . daily, hourly, and . . . in his very sleep, heard a voice crying in his ears, that he should strive to make her a Christian.'<sup>36</sup> This pious adventurer resolved "'to labor for the conversion of the unregenerated maiden;" and winning the favor of Pocahontas, he desired her in marriage.'<sup>37</sup> Bancroft's 'youthful princess' readily received this instruction 'with docility.' Thus Bancroft weaves romance and conversion with Pocahontas's natural intelligence and youthful docility. In his lavish prose, Bancroft glorifies the cradle of her assimilation to English life: 'The little church of Jamestown,—which rested on rough pine columns, fresh from the forest, and . . . in a style of rugged architecture as wild, if not as frail, as an Indian's wigwam.'<sup>38</sup> The historian's distinction is clear: although both English church and Indian wigwam are 'wild,' the wigwam and the Indian way that it represents is inherently weak and destined to fall before a superior cultural structure.

Bancroft concludes in both versions that the marriage between Pocahontas and Rolfe was singular and represents a fragile, short-lived bond between white colonists and Indians. In his adult ver-

35. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, 1: 163.

36. Bancroft, *History of the Colonization of the United States*, 1: 76.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

sion, Bancroft's language is definite, even blunt: 'The English and the Indian races remained disunited; and the weakest gradually became extinct.'<sup>39</sup> His wording for America's youth is oblique: 'The English and the Indians remained at variance, and the weakest gradually disappeared.'<sup>40</sup> The use of 'disappeared' reflects the possibility of a situation in which the Indian is removed from the landscape visible to white eyes. Bancroft eulogizes Pocahontas in both versions as an 'exemplary' wife and mother; however, in the adult version, the historian praises her manners rooted in 'wild simplicity,' while in the juvenile version, he glorifies this 'daughter of the wilderness,' who, made all the more beautiful by her 'childlike simplicity,' died 'leaving a spotless name, and dwelling in memory under the form of perpetual youth.'<sup>41</sup> This later configuration of Pocahontas characterizes her as a truly unique Indian at an ephemeral stage in life that allowed her to be receptive to full religious and cultural conversion. Bancroft's image of Pocahontas as an eternally youthful and uniquely transcendent figure would be revisited again and again by other writers for American youth in search of a heroine.

This evangelical and pastoral idealization of Pocahontas was appropriated by other nineteenth-century writers for American youth (fig. 5). Although Lydia Sigourney faithfully covers the rescue scene in her *Child's Book* of 1850, that incident is not used as an illustration; instead we see a wood-engraved adaptation of Chapman's painting—only this time, Pocahontas is white in every sense of the word. Her white skin makes Pocahontas into a veritable white woman. As in Chapman's painting, Pocahontas's uncle and brother are engraved with dark complexions; however, Pocahontas's supportive sister is given white skin, perhaps to echo the bond of sisterly love and sensibility shared by them. The other illustration appearing in the account is this engraving of the rus-

39. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, 1: 164. See also Roy Harvey Pearce's discussion of Bancroft's treatment of Indian 'savagery,' *Savagism and Civilization*, 162.

40. Bancroft, *History of the Colonization of the United States*, 1: 77.

41. Bancroft, *History of the United States*, 1: 164; Bancroft, *History of the Colonization of the United States*, 1: 77.



Fig. 5. This wood engraving published in Lydia Sigourney's *The Child's Book* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1847) probably gave many children their only exposure to John Gadsby Chapman's 'Baptism of Pocahontas.' Pocahontas and her supportive sister have white complexions. The text surrounding the engraving describes the baptism of Pocahontas as having taken place 'in the first church that was ever built in this western country.' Text and picture unite to kindle a realization of native antiquity in American youth.

tic Virginia church already lauded by Bancroft—according to Sigourney, 'the ruins of it may still be seen, at Jamestown'—thus linking Pocahontas to a very real sense of American antiquity.<sup>42</sup>

With this new idealization of Pocahontas as a virtuous Christian convert, her marriage to John Rolfe received new emphasis as the crucial event that completed her assimilation to English culture. In this new interpretation, Smith, when he appears, is relegated to the role of a fatherly figure who inspires the girl Pocahontas to abandon her savage lifestyle. In fact, the rescue scene is bypassed entirely by Mary Durang, a writer of moral tales for girls. Instead, she embroiders a highly romantic version of Pocahontas's con-

42. Lydia H. Sigourney, *The Child's Book* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1847), 119.

version and courtship in her collection of stories, *Love and Pride*, copyrighted in 1842. In Durang's words, 'John Rolfe . . . was an enthusiast whose mind was led away by the desire of adventure; for which purpose he had emigrated to the forests of Virginia; his dreams were filled with voice of love, whispering in his ear, to make the wild child of the woods, a Christian.'<sup>43</sup> For Durang, this romantic and spiritual relationship reached its proper consummation 'before the rural alter [sic], where the marriage vows were uttered in broken accents; but not less pure, as they were uttered from the heart.' This feminized interpretation of Bancroft puts the forest princess and the young adventurer on fairly equal footing as the inspiration for each other's spiritual regeneration. Once this regeneration is complete, Pocahontas achieves success at the English court, but is wise enough to prefer the 'dear freedom of the western wilds' to 'the magnificence of English living.'<sup>44</sup> Although Pocahontas dies before she can return to those 'western wilds,' her reputation as a purely American heroine devoted to freedom and upright living is secure.

With this new interest in Pocahontas's peaceful assimilation to white culture through conversion and marriage, the wedding scene symbolizing the creation of the first American family began to appear in children's books as a tranquil counterweight to the rescue of John Smith (fig. 6). This evocative engraving by illustrator Benson John Lossing for his *Common School History of the United States* from 1865, shows a dark Pocahontas in an English gown and regal headdress (with perhaps a feather in it).<sup>45</sup> The bride is shown in three-quarter view, her eyes cast down, as though to modestly shield herself from public glance. Rolfe, on

43. Mary Durang, *Love and Pride* (Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Baltimore: Fisher & Brother, c. 1852; copyright 1847).

44. *Ibid.*

45. Benson John Lossing, *A Common-School History of the United States: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1865). The engraving appears on page 31. This engraving is based upon John C. McCrae's engraving, *The Marriage of Pocahontas*, published in 1855. A reproduction of this latter engraving appears in Vivien Green Fryd's *Art and Empire*, 50. Whereas Lossing's engraving is suggestive of either an interior or outdoor scene, McCrae's portrayal is definitely set in a church, with a ray of sunlight through an open window sanctifying the couple.



Fig. 6. 'Marriage of Pocahontas,' a wood engraving signed Lossing Barritt is similar in composition to John McCrae's engraving of the same name published in 1855. In that version Pocahontas is light skinned, in contrast to the effect created by the stipple lines on her face and neck in Benson John Lossing's engraving published in Lossing's *Common-School History of the United States* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1865). The scene's focus is squarely upon the couple: a dark-skinned Pocahontas is the portrait of submissive modesty, her eyes downcast in deference to Rolfe, who looks directly at the minister while declaring his vows. The scenery is suggestive of both a church and an arbor, with the vine-laden gothic arch. This engraving depicts the wedding as a community event unifying the races and sexes within the peace of a tamed natural world.

the other hand, is shown in profile, with a steady gaze and raised right hand, declaring his vow forthrightly to the minister. We cannot tell whether they are inside or outside, but the decorative vines hung over a suspiciously gothic arch suggest a unification of spirituality and a tamed natural world. Aside from the Indian bride, this scene is dominated by white people. Note the two white women and children in the foreground—this wedding is portrayed as a true family celebration in which all ages and sexes are included. The Indians are mostly relegated to the background, with the exception of the warrior sitting in the foreground, who has laid down his bow and shield to witness the union of two peoples.

Not unlike the wood engraving of the *Baptism*, Lossing's version of the wedding scene is a simplified copy of Henry Brueckner's painting, *The Marriage of Pocahontas* (fig. 7). Brueckner's painting entered American parlors through a metal engraving made and published by John C. McCrae in 1855. In McCrae's parlor print, Pocahontas is a buxom maiden costumed in Turkish garb with a peacock-feathered headdress. Although the composition of the minister and couple are copied faithfully by Lossing, McCrae's print alone features a dignified Indian man (perhaps Powhatan) clasping the hand of an English gentleman colonist in fellowship. In McCrae's print, the scene is definitely set in a church, with a ray of sunlight sanctifying the couple. The tamed natural world is brought into the English sanctuary with flowers tastefully scattered upon the floor like a Brussels carpet; and several blossoms lay atop a shield and tomahawk to symbolize love as the successful conqueror of enmity between Indian and colonist.

Once this literary and pictorial iconography had been developed that assured her virtue as a maiden princess, Christian convert, and wife, Pocahontas could now dominate colorful picture books expressly devoted to her. *Pocahontas the Indian Princess* was issued by prolific New York picture-book publisher Philip Cozans in about 1857, during a period of monumental debate over the ethical nature of race relations and bounds of federal sovereignty. Sporting lithographs designed by popular illustrator Justin H.



Fig. 7. 'The Marriage of Pocahontas, from the original picture in the possession of the publisher.' Parlor print, image area, 14" by 34<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>". The model for Lossing's wood engraving described in figure 6, 'The Marriage of Pocahontas' (c. 1855), was engraved on metal by John C. McCrae after a painting by Henry Brueckner. This expansive engraving was intended for framing and hanging on a parlor wall. It features a socially acceptable and morally uplifting scene from American antiquity. Note that although Lossing closely copied the composition of the primary figures, this print is more complex in that not only does it feature more guests at the wedding, but it also is undeniably an interior scene requiring contrasts in light and shadow that are well expressed through the very fine lines of a metal engraving. Very little is known about Henry Brueckner beyond his name. John C. McCrae had a long career in New York, where between about 1850 and 1880, he worked as an engraver and print publisher specializing in historical scenes and landscapes.

Howard, this book has a fairy-tale feel. Judging from her slightly wavy hair, her Caucasian facial features, and her beige complexion, this Pocahontas resembles a white girl who has dressed up in Indian costume (fig. 8). We are introduced to this picture-book heroine right away; she appears on the title plate as a sensual girl/woman lounging luxuriously in her canoe, the curves of her



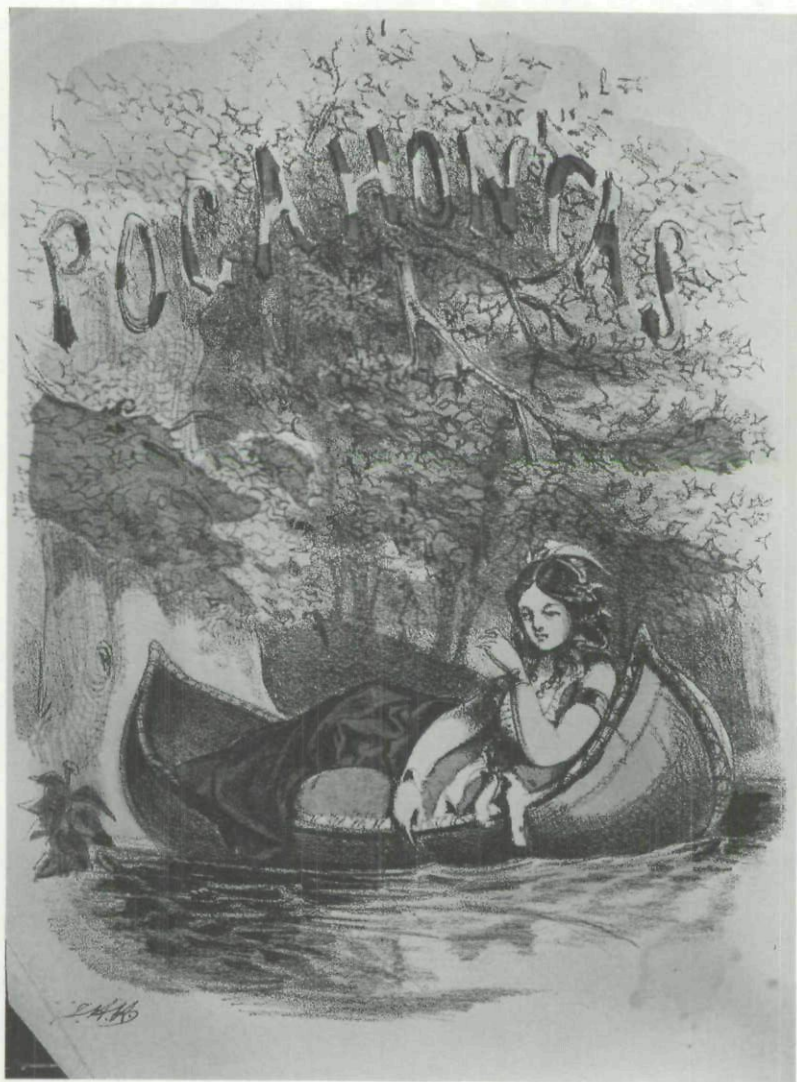


Fig. 8. Frontispiece to *Pocahontas the Indian Princess* (New York: Philip J. Cozans, c. 1857). This rather sultry incarnation of Pocahontas lounges luxuriously in her private canoe. She is dressed in regal shades of red and blue, and sports a feathered headdress akin to a tiara. This picture book apparently helped to launch the careers of the visual artists associated with it. The illustrations are by Justin H. Howard, who later spent his most productive years as a staff artist for the McLoughlin Bros. publishing firm in the 1860s and '70s. Howard's illustrations for *Pocahontas* were lithographed by George Snyder, James Black, and Hermann Sturn, who formed a prolific lithography firm active in New York ca. 1854–1872.

feminine lines echoed by those of her private vessel. The picture shows in no uncertain terms that she is a special creature whose time and activities are clearly her own. In the text she appears on page one as the heroine, an Indian girl who, though 'living amid the wild scenes of savage life,' had a heart open to the distress of others, and possessed 'all the tender feelings of the white girl.'<sup>46</sup> Once again, she is a transcendental figure, not wholly immersed in a savage lifestyle.

From the very start Pocahontas is shown as a privileged girl. She is the only female in the scene of Powhatan's judgment of Smith. Her soft features stand in contrast to the harsh lines and wild war paint of her father and council (fig. 9). As in other depictions of the rescue scene, Pocahontas is placed in a maternal pose, her right hand cradled around Smith's head. This time, she is fully clothed, her bodice resembling the dress of a respectable white woman. Once again, she is the only female in the picture and embodies a gentle corrective to her father's violent spirit.

This image of Pocahontas carrying provisions and herbal remedies to the needy colonists celebrates her role as a domestic missionary (fig. 10). By the 1850s, juvenile Sunday school literature idealized girls and women who ventured out with baskets in hand to minister to the needs of the poor. Essentially, this is an Americanized version of Mary on the road to Egypt—and that analogy is quite apt, given her tranquillity and the peaceful power that she is given as the central figure.<sup>47</sup> She rides sidesaddle like a 'true' lady, while her Indian tribesmen carry the bulk of the supplies on foot.

Howard's illustration of Pocahontas's captivity directly contradicts the text (fig. 11). According to the story, Pocahontas duly submits to her captivity by Captain Argall: 'The captain was kind to her in every respect, except keeping her captive. Pocahontas,

46. *Pocahontas the Indian Princess* (New York: Philip J. Cozans, 1857?), 3-4.

47. I am grateful to Prof. Barry O'Connell for suggesting this analogy. For examples of stories featuring female domestic missionaries, see *The One Dollar Bill* (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1845); *Mary Ellis* (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1849).

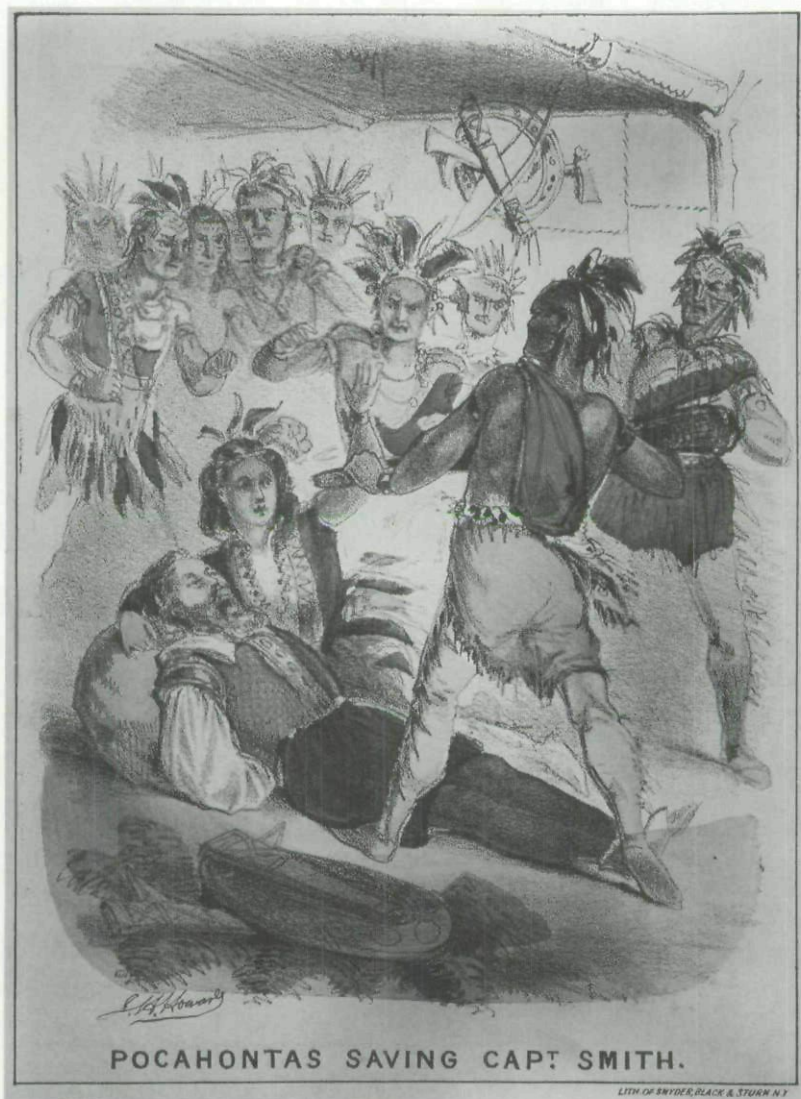


Fig. 9. 'Pocahontas Saving Capt. Smith.' In this version of the rescue scene by Justin H. Howard for *Pocahontas the Indian Princess*, she interposes herself between Smith and her father and resembles Smith more than her fellow tribesmen. Her close-fitting blouse looks like a Victorian bodice. Her striped skirt and headdress are the only suggestions of Indian dress. Note that the facial features of Pocahontas and Smith are best defined, while the braves around them have uniformly 'savage' countenances. The curves of Pocahontas's saving gestures are contrasted by the pointed lines of the weaponry both in the foreground and background. The illustrations in this volume are 6  $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 5".



Fig. 10. 'Carrying Corn to the White Settlement,' an illustration by Justin H. Howard for *Pocahontas the Indian Princess*, shows Pocahontas as domestic missionary on a mission of mercy to Jamestown. Tranquil and determined, she is the American Mary on the road to Egypt. Note that she is the true lady, riding sidesaddle, while her male aides carry the bulk of the provisions on foot.



Fig. 11. 'Pocahontas Imprisoned,' by Justin H. Howard for *Pocahontas the Indian Princess*, provides a rare glimpse at an angry and defiant Pocahontas, rebuffing the advances of Captain Argall. Her dress is half-savage half-civilized with its red leggings, blue and red overskirt, and red bodice. Note that she is roughly the size of her captor, embodying the 'American' defiance of 'English' villainy.

ever ready to make peace, promised to do all in her power.<sup>48</sup> But the picture shows a rather defiant Pocahontas with clenched fists, gazing down at an Argall in cowardly retreat. Pocahontas is shown in full face with a look of moral outrage and anger, while Argall's countenance is vaguely sketched, as though he was clearly of lesser importance.

Rolfe's courtship of Pocahontas is idealized as a series of horseback rides reminiscent of medieval romance. He is 'a gentleman of high character and standing in England.'<sup>49</sup> No mention is made of any efforts to convert her. Indeed, the marriage plans read as a series of contradictions: 'Pocahontas knew his heart and consented to become his wife; for she too, had loved him from their first meeting.'<sup>50</sup> Once Powhatan heard of their marriage plans, he is described as being 'highly pleased and gave his consent at once.'<sup>51</sup> In this context, Pocahontas is characterized as being independent, but also a good enough daughter to inspire her father's approval—which seems to be moot at best.

In this marriage scene, Pocahontas is attired in feathery regalia exotic enough to be considered Indian, but here again, her features are as Caucasian as those of her husband and the minister (fig. 12). All of the guests are Indians with feathers sticking out of their heads, and although they look fairly peaceful, they are firmly separated from the couple by the rail. The scene is definitely an interior, its windows, rail, and plank floor declaring that the participants are in the civilized confines of an English church.

Pocahontas's contradictory relationship with her savage father is emphasized once again in the description of her successful debut as the Princess Rebecca at the English court. 'Although she was the favorite of her father, she never had any desire to return to him; yet she would ever express the warmest feelings when speaking of him.'<sup>52</sup> In this scene of her presentation to the King

48. *Pocahontas the Indian Princess*, 9.

49. *Ibid.*, 12.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*, 13.

52. *Ibid.*



Fig. 12. In this marriage scene drawn by Justin H. Howard for *Pocahontas the Indian Princess*, Pocahontas, Rolfe, and the minister dominate the action while the rather placid looking 'savages' are relegated behind the altar rail. In contrast to the defiant captive, Pocahontas the bride appears in a pensive and submissive pose, her eyes modestly downcast. Her skirt is longer and better defined than in the other pictures—as though she is 'growing' an English skirt.

and Queen, Pocahontas's assimilation is complete. She wears a long skirt, only her brightly colored clothing and feather head-dress revealing her Indian background.

The anonymous narrator leaves us with a transcendent and almost Christlike image of the benevolent princess: 'Thus passed away a kind and gentle heart; an instrument from the hands of God who had wrought miracles among the savages. . . .' And the writer concludes that 'her deeds have covered a multitude of their sins.'<sup>53</sup>

The picture-book Pocahontas reaches a richly colorful apex in Paul Pryor's *Pocahontas; or The Indian Maiden* issued by the McLoughlin Bros. firm in 1873. Paul Pryor was the pen name of American author E. T. Taggard. Born in 1839, Taggard wrote several biographies of American heroes for children in the 1870s before disappearing into obscurity. With its forceful language and adventurous spirit, Taggard's biography celebrates Pocahontas as a heroine of independent initiative more than any of the earlier works. With this treatment, the forest princess joins the ranks of all American heroines: Jo March scribbling blood and thunder tales, Katy Redburn concocting candy to support her family, and Dora Darling camping with a Civil War regiment to free the family slave.<sup>54</sup> Taggard's text and these magnificent chromolithographs combine to create an American heroine whose exceptional qualities distance her from any realistic comparison to living women, white or Indian (fig. 13).

In this vivid portrayal of the rescue, Pocahontas is a regal copper-toned princess who holds Smith against her chest in a position that is at once sensual and maternal. Taggard's forceful language defines the heroine as a chance-taker from the start: 'It was a fearful risk she ran. . . . She was pale as marble, and spoke not a word, but her beautiful eyes, filled with love and tenderness,

53. *Ibid.*, 15-16.

54. See Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1868-69); Oliver Optic (i.e., William Taylor Adams), *Poor and Proud; or The Fortunes of Katy Redburn* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, & Co., 1859); Jane G. Austin, *Dora Darling: the Daughter of the Regiment* (Boston: J. E. Tilton and Co., 1865).



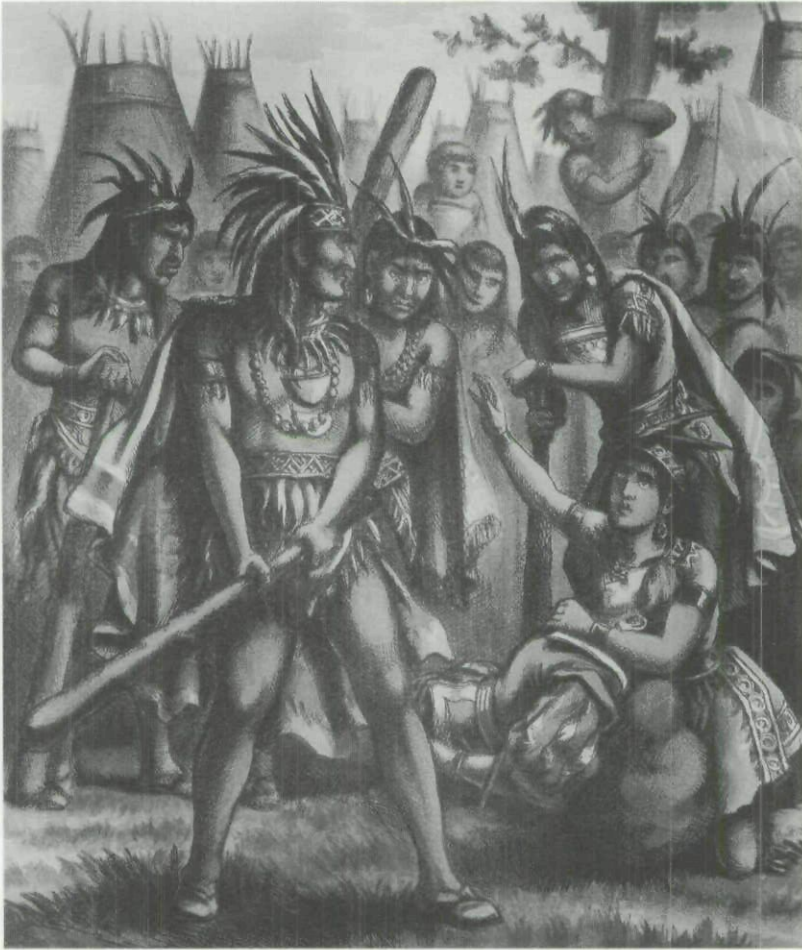


Fig. 13. In this version of the rescue scene, Pocahontas is clearly an Indian, with bronze skin and straight black hair; but with her buckskin dress and leggings she embodies the Plains Indian popularized by artists like George Catlin. The unknown artist whose illustrations appear in *Pocahontas* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1873) by 'Paul Pryor' (i.e., E. T. Taggard) followed others in showing her as the only female figure in the picture.

gazed upon the Indian chief.<sup>55</sup> Note how the feathered head-dresses and buckskin clothing are not the dress-up costumes of the 1857 picture book, but they are stock images of Indians nonetheless. They are reminiscent of the vivid images of Plains Indians popularized by George Catlin's drawings (fig. 14).<sup>56</sup>

More than any other text that I have examined, this version celebrates Pocahontas's independent spirit and natural instincts in her courageous moonlight hike through the woods to warn Smith of the impending Indian attack: 'She was alone in the black woods on that dreary night among the wild beasts. . . . Many times she lost her way; but her Indian habits taught her how to find the right road again.' In this picture she is the true child of the wild, a seasoned survivor.<sup>57</sup> Not one but two pictures are devoted to this exciting episode: the second shows Smith listening intently to Pocahontas, his concentrated gaze reflecting genuine respect for her intelligence and bravery.

Taggard vilifies Captain Argall as a shameless and cruel man who convinces his brother and sister-in-law to lure Pocahontas onto his ship (fig. 15). According to every other version I have read, Pocahontas was lured aboard by her own aunt and uncle. Taggard chose to make the villains white. In this compelling illustration, the weeping captive princess is flanked by a hardened Argall, who assumes a pseudofatherly pose of putting his arm around Pocahontas, while to her right, Argall's conniving sister-in-law stares coldly at the betrayed heroine. While Argall is the sole villain of the 1857 picture book, Taggard's version makes Pocahontas the hapless victim of a white conspiracy.

Pocahontas's supposedly cruel imprisonment is softened by her

55. Paul Pryor (i.e., E. T. Taggard), *Pocahontas* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., 1873), 5.

56. George Catlin's drawings of Indians had long been a part of the popular iconography by the 1870s. Between 1832 and 1835, George Catlin travelled to the Mississippi River and the Great Plains to capture scenes from Indian life. His sketches eventually comprised an exhibition entitled *Catlin's Indian Gallery*, which toured American and European cities from 1837 through at least 1869. See Peter H. Hassrick's introduction, George Catlin, *Drawings of the North American Indians* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1984), vii-xiv. See also the wonderful folio edition George Catlin, *Catlin's North American Indians* (London, 1844).

57. *Ibid.*, 6-7.



Fig. 14. Pocahontas, the independent heroine and adventuress, hikes through the tangled wood to warn Smith of her father's plan to attack the English in the 1873 McLoughlin Bros.' *Pocahontas*. She is the paragon of bravery and gentility—lifting up her buckskin skirt. She is drawn without facial features—as though she is as much a design element as the trees. This chromolithograph is printed with a splendid array of blues, violets, greens, and browns to convey the lush mystery of the forest. The illustrations in this book are  $9\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $8\frac{1}{8}$ ".



Fig. 15. In this captivity scene from the McLoughlin Bros. publication, a weeping Pocahontas is surrounded by her white conspirators: Captain Argall is to her left, making an attempt to offer a pat of comfort to her back. He is the portrait of hypocrisy with his cold-hearted gaze. To her right are Argall's villainous brother and sister-in-law, who congratulate each other for luring Pocahontas on board.

romance with John Rolfe—'a worthy gentleman.' Once again, Powhatan is described as giving his consent once the couple's marriage intentions had been announced. There is no mention of her conversion, but the orderly and peaceful church wedding scene is now firmly embedded as the iconographic counterweight to the violence and excitement of the rescue (fig. 16). Pocahontas with her fringed buckskin costume and head band could be from the Great Plains. Pocahontas and Rolfe are drawn in profile and are subordinate to the pageantry of the entire scene. They are not the entire focus as in Lossing's engraving or Howard's lithograph in the 1857 picture book. The Indian guests have honored positions in the foreground, as though they are as much a part of the show as the couple getting married.<sup>58</sup> The onlookers are mainly white men and women who look as though they are curious members of an audience. Taggard emphasizes the uniqueness of this event; he writes: 'The result of this singular marriage was a union of peace between the Indians and the settlers.'<sup>59</sup>

Despite Taggard's description of the adult Pocahontas as a socially and romantically successful wife and mother, the author is compelled to revisit the savage side of the forest princess. After relating the story of her early death, Taggard launches into a racy account of the merry Pocahontas and her girl friends playfully enticing Smith and his companions with a suggestive campfire dance. This story goes back directly to Smith's memoirs—but this is the only example that I have found of its being used in the pages of a children's book. It is tucked in at the end, like a surprise trapdoor.

After this racy interlude, Taggard declares that 'For beauty and intelligence, Pocahontas was as far above her race as the mountain is above the valley.'<sup>60</sup> In closing, the author describes the final

58. By 1873 Indians had become theatrical objects on display. Buffalo Bill Cody's first Wild West play, *Scouts of the Prairie*, debuted in Chicago December 16, 1872. Written by Cody's colleague Ned Buntline (Edward Z. C. Judson), the play featured the 'young Apache captive Azteka.' See ad, *Chicago Tribune*, December 21, 1872.

59. Paul Pryor, *Pocahontas*, 9.

60. *Ibid.*, 10.



Fig. 16. The wedding scene from *Pocahontas the Indian Princess*. Pocahontas and Rolfe are depicted in profile, their facial features largely hidden. If anything, the minister and Indian witnesses are more clearly visible. The bride resembles more a resident of the plains than of the tidewater, with her buckskin outfit and braids. The wedding party is colorfully dressed in yellow, red, and blue, while the clothing of the mostly white spectators is in more subdued shades of pink, green, and light blue. Note that most of the spectators are standing some distance away from the wedding party, not unlike an audience viewing a show from a theater balcony.

meeting between Smith and Pocahontas, in which the gutsy princess insists that Smith recognize her publicly as his daughter, as they share the same country. Of course, by 1873, with American flags flying on both Atlantic and Pacific coasts, her assertion has all the ring of manifest destiny. Taggard pronounces that Pocahontas is 'the loved of two great nations'—that is, of the United States and England.<sup>61</sup> The Pamunkey nation was not even a contender.

As I watched the Barbie-doll Pocahontas embrace a blond-haired Smith in a Worcester movie theater in the summer of 1995, I smiled as I thought about the way each generation's Pocahontas has been re-created, re-packaged, re-configured to meet the curiosities, ideals, and anxieties of the contemporary culture. In the nineteenth century she became a truly legendary figure that could both embody the socially accepted feminine qualities of emotional sensitivity, moral virtue, and obedience—while putting her life on the line for John Smith or kindling a romantic flame with John Rolfe. From these fascinating pictures and convoluted texts, we see an exotic creature whose official story, while sanctioned for youth, emerges as a web of contradictions.

61. *Ibid.*, 11.

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