

Document #7

A Summary History of New-England, from the First Settlement at Plymouth, to the Acceptance of the Federal Constitution. Comprehending a General Sketch of the American War. Dedham, Mass., 1799.

This was written by Hannah Adams who is best known for her work on religious themes.

Many, especially in early life, may wish to peruse a sketch of American affairs, before they have time or ability to acquire more enlarged knowledge. Though the compiler of the ensuing work is impressed with the many difficulties attending it, yet she hopes the charge of arrogance will not be incurred, since her design is merely to encourage and gratify such a wish, by giving the outlines of the interesting history of New-England. . . . But though a female cannot be supposed to be accurate in describing, and must shrink with horror in relating the calamities of war, yet she may be allowed to *feel a lively interest in the great cause, for which the sword was drawn in America.* The compiler is apprized of the numerous defects of the work, and sensible it will not bear the test of criticism. Her incapacity for executing it has been heightened by a long interval of ill health, which has precluded much of that studious application, which, in a work of this kind, is indispensably necessary. She hopes, therefore, that generous humanity will soften the asperity of censure, and that the public will view with candor the assiduous, though, perhaps, unsuccessful efforts of a female pen.

Questions for Document 7:

1. What justification does Adams provide for her ability to write the history of New England?
2. What cautions does she introduce to the reader?

Questions for Document 6:

1. What does it mean to be disinterested? How does Wollstonecraft argue her case as a disinterested person?
2. What does she appear to value?
3. What role does she believe women are uniquely able to play?