Contents

In	troduction: "If I am your Wife, I am not your Slave"	3
	The Political Uses of Ancient Patriarchy	4
	Divorce, Jurisdiction, and the Location of Law	9
	Debt and the Paradox of Masculine Possessory Rights in	
	the Age of Revolutions	13
1	The Trials of Christopher and Elizabeth Lawson:	
	An Introduction to Post-Reformation Debates about Marriage	16
	The Puritan Context of the Lawson Marriage	19
	Arguments for Separation and Divorce	25
	Weighing the Charges: Credibility, Economic Misconduct, Sexual Crime,	
	Racial Boundaries, and Slander	35
	Law's Irresolution	45
2	Submit or Starve: Manby v. Scott and the Making of a Precedent	48
	Dynastic Marriage and Family Politics	50
	Divorce in Interregnum England	52
	Manby v. Scott and the Domestication of Politics	66
	Making a Precedent	71
3	The Runaway Press	77
	Runaway Slaves and Servants and the Development of	
	Colonial Labor Systems	79
	Wayward Wives, Colonial Law, and a Shift in Practice	90
	The Rise of the Press	102
4	Marriage, Slavery, and Anglo-Imperial Jurisdictional Politics	110
	Disorder in the Legal System: Common Law, Equity,	
	and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction	112
	Colonial Household Conflicts, Local Law, and the Shadow	
	of Imperial Norms in the 1720s	117
	Ancient Patriarchy and the Invention of "Possessory Rights"	126
	Repercussions of Imperial Intervention in Marriage Law	132
	The Rise of Blackstone	137
	The Echo Chamber of the 1760s	143

5	A Matter of Credit: Husbands' Claims	146
	"Lest she should run me in debt": Credibility and	
	Masculine Vulnerability	151
	"Behaved in a very unbecoming manner and has eloped	
	from me": Implied Sexual Scandal	161
	"Some debates that have subsisted between us":	
	Domestic Violence	165
	"Will not be persuaded, either by me or her best friends,	
	to return": Preempting the Law	166
	"To her usual place of abode, and to her duty":	
	Husbands versus Communities	169
6	"In Justice to my Character": Wives' Replies	177
	A Change in Values or a Change in Venue?	
	Patterns over Time and Place	182
	Ann Wood's Advertisement	184
	"Endanger my life by dwelling with him": Ann Wood's Plea	187
	"On the Providence of God": Prayers and Curses	192
	"The few remaining days of my disconsolate life":	
	Sentimental Dependence	195
	Authorship, Agency, and Remedy	201
7	Wives Not Slaves	207
	Liberty versus Loyalty: Marriage as Metaphor	209
	"If I am your Wife, I am not your Slave"	211
	"The Privilege of my Negroe Wench"	220
	"Her service & conjugal comfort which he had a right to have"	231
	"We know better than to repeal our Masculine systems"	241

8	Rethinking the Revolutionary Road to Divorce	
	Divorce and the Jurisdictional and Personal Politics of Revolution	248
	Divorce and Emancipation: A Useful False Equivalence	260
	Divorce as a Woman's Remedy: Revolutionary Expectations	
	and the "First Families" of the United States	267
	"Down the Stream of Time Unnoticed": Family Secrets,	
	Family Stories, and Legal Change	282
Epilogue: "The Rigour of the Old Rule"		
	Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Legal Education	287
	Manby v. Scott in the Nineteenth Century	290

Acknowledgments 295
Abbreviations and Source Notes 299
Notes 301
Index 363

WHEREAS Eunice Davis,

Wise of me John Davis of Portsmouth, Taylor, has absented herself from me, without just Cause, and resules to live with me, tho' often requested, and has lest three small Children in a very unnatural Manner:

THIS is therefore to forbid any Person entertaining or harbouring her on my Account, or giving her Credit for Money or any Thing whatsoever. And yet notwithstanding this Conduct, I promite, in Case she will soon return to her Duty, and the Care of her Children, as a Mother ought to do, she shall be kindly received, provided her suture Conduct is agreeable to Reason.

John + Davis, Mark.

To Mr. John Davis, Taylor: HEREAS You have been pleased in your great Wildom, to represent me in the public Prints, as an absconding Wife, without any just Caule for so doing, and still refule to live with you, tho' often requested: And as an additional Aggravation, to compleat my Character, you say, I have left three imali Children in a very unnatural Manner: This is therefore to give public NOTICE, That your Charge is unjust, as I can easily prove. I challenge you to produce one Inflance wherein I have misbehaved towards you. I am your Wife, I am not your Slave, and little thought when I acknowledg'd you as my Husband, that you would pretend to assume an unreasonable POWER to tyrannize and infult over me; and that without any just Caule. What is become of your pretended Love and Affection ? The Consequence of your Conduct, and the Childrens Misfortune is a great Trouble that lays upon my Mind. as they ought not to suffer for the Iniquities of their Father. I always was, and fill am willing to do my Duty, provided you put it in my Power, and behave as you ought Tho' for fix Years past you bave to do. had the Power over me, you shall not any longer, if Justice can be obtain'd, unless Something Extraordinary Should beppen in your Conduct. My Proposals of Reconciliation you shall know at a proper Season. In the mean Time, the first Step you bave to take. is to make an Acknowledgement, in a public Monner, and retrieve my Character, which vou bave unjustly espersed. Your Injur'd Wife, EUNICE DAVIS!