Cultural perception in early New England| Europeans, Indians, and the origins of the Pequot War of 1637

John Lazuk
*The University of Montana*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

**Recommended Citation**

COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1976

This is an unpublished manuscript in which copyright subsists. Any further reprinting of its contents must be approved by the author.

Mansfield Library
University of Montana
Date: 1984
CULTURAL PERCEPTION IN EARLY NEW ENGLAND: EUROPEANS, INDIANS, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE PEQUOT WAR OF 1637

by

John Lazuk
B.A., University of Montana, 1981

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA 1983

Approved by:

[Signatures]

Chairman, Board of Examiners
Dean, Graduate School

Date 12-2-83
Lazuk, John, M.A., December 1983

Cultural Perception in Early New England: Europeans, Indians, and the Origins of the Pequot War of 1637 (126)

Director: Dr. Harry Fritz

The Pequot War in early New England is one of the most frequently cited but least understood episodes in the literature of Indian-White relations in America. Historians split over placing the blame for the struggle on Puritanism, land greed, and racism or in defending the English colonist's motives and condemning the Pequot as blood-thirsty and deceitful. Each side, however, has failed in adequately examining the important overriding cultural differences between the two antagonists which helps to shape these perceptions. This study attempts to do this by first examining the pre-contact native political system in southern New England, then investigating European perceptions of the New World, the Dutch and various English claims to the area, particularly the key Connecticut River region, and finally how native and European perceived critical events that ultimately led to hostilities.

Two distinct cultural world views clashed in the forests of southern New England. This conflict can be placed in the context of events that occurred when an expanding Europe confronted the indigenous peoples anywhere in the world. The Pequot Indians had long been part of a functioning and viable cultural system that had evolved in southern New England which possessed definite conceptions of group organization, land use, leadership roles, and decision-making. The Dutch and English who contacted them had their own preconceived ideas, influenced by travel literature and European intellectual tradition, about the New World, its inhabitants, and what economic, sociological, and political goals could be accomplished there. New World realities failed to alter these ideas significantly during this early period and actually reinforced some. Neither side sought to fully accommodate to the other's position in dealings with each other. This resulted in both sides failing to comprehend critical distinctions in each's view on such matters as trade, land use, diplomacy, political obligations, and war. These differences continued to be ignored as contacts grew and misconception and misunderstanding became ingrained in each side's attitude toward the other. The radically changing political environment of southern New England in the 1630s due to native depopulation from disease, expansion of English settlements to the Connecticut River, and internal struggles in both camps further exasperated the situation as each sought to promote their immediate self-interests at the expense of solving long-term differences and problems. Their ethnocentric viewpoints made real dialogue to resolve these issues difficult if not impossible and fed suspicion and hostility of each other's motives as time passed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1

Chapter

I. BEFORE THE DELUGE . . . . . 20

II. THE MEETING OF THE "WORLDS" . 32

The Intellectual Background
The Dutch
The Destroyers
England and the Founding of Connecticut
"Saints" in New England

III. TO THE MISTICK FORT . . . . 79

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 116
INTRODUCTION

The series of events which culminated in warfare between the Puritan settlements in New England and the Pequot Indians of eastern Connecticut in 1637 ranks among the most dramatic and controversial episodes in all of New England history. Its seeds were planted in ideas formed in the Old World, watered by the dynamism of an expanding Europe, transported across the Atlantic, and then placed in conflict with customs and attitudes just as ancient in the forests of the New World. The results are of central importance to the history of English expansion in the North Atlantic coast of America. It inaugurated a period of rapid settlement in New England which consolidated the English presence in the New World. This was accomplished only through the near destruction of the Pequot Indians in a short but vicious campaign that featured a battle in which hundreds of people, the overwhelming number of old men, women, and children, were burned alive and a cleanup operation in which the Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut general courts paid a bounty on Pequot heads. Bound Indian prisoners were thrown off boats into Long Island Sound. Many more captives were sold into slavery either in New England or the West Indies. Finally, by formal treaty, the colonial
authorities forbade the survivors ever again to call themselves Pequot.

The conflict has spurred some historical controversy, though no scholarly general study has appeared which thoroughly treats the war as a single entity. As Alden Vaughan has written, as in the case with most wars, the conflict between the Pequots and the English raises for the historian the twin problems of cause and responsibility, and ultimately involves the whole question of Indian-Puritan relations during the first century of English settlement, along with the basic nature of the Puritan experiment, and the justice and humanity of the participants. Yet because of the limited scope of the war and the quick success of the English in fighting it, historians mention this conflict only as a preliminary to the larger King Philip's War of 1675-1677. Forgotten are the elements that make the 1637 war different in both motives and scope. As a result, some major interpretations seem more intent on explaining what happened in the 1630s by attitudes and trends from the 1670s from which the documentation is much fuller and themes seem easier to discern. The reverse is closer to the truth. The Pequot War set the pattern not only for Puritan-Indian relations but Indian-Indian relations as well. The latter was as much a key to the defeat of Philip the Wampanoag as it was for Sassacus the Pequot.
These relationships were formed in a young New England where English power was not fully developed. During the period with which this paper deals, the Europeans acted more like competing tribes than assimilating conquerors. The Dutch and English tolerated each other as well as French and tribal interests in the area out of necessity more than conviction. Short-term political and trade alliances were common. The different European groups acted at times out of a notion of the common good as well as for individual advantage. Numerous temporary alliances with the various Indian tribes suited both sides. Each recognized their weaknesses. Far from being secure, the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 was a harried, unsteady body torn by religious and political threats from the Antinomian Crisis and the possible revocation of its charter by the king. The fledgling Connecticut River towns not only feared possible military threats from the Indians, French, and Dutch but were also trying to break away politically from the authority of the parent Bay colony. The local southern New England Indians were also reeling from conditions caused by the European incursions into the area. The effects of disease, the fur trade, and white settlement had already begun to change the Indians' culture and the political balance of power. More importantly, the Pequot Indians were going through an internal political battle that by 1637 resulted in the secession of a part of the tribe under the
subsachem Uncas. The latter became the Puritans' most dependable allies in the war and for years to come.¹¹

Writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tend to view the war as a defensive struggle waged by the Puritans, fully justified in the face of Pequot hostility to civilization and, following earlier Puritan rhetoric, against Christianity.¹² Since then, however, new interpretations have emerged. Alternative theories blame Puritan lust for Indian land, Puritan Indian policy, Puritan perceptions of the Indian and the New World, and Puritan religion for causing the friction that led to war. One historian saw the Pequots as a threat to Indian and English alike while the foremost authority on Puritanism in America failed to bring up Puritan-Indian relations at all.¹³ In 1965 a major study was published on Puritan-Indian relations which squarely placed the blame on the Pequots for war in 1637. Alden Vaughan's New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675¹⁴ was the first real synthesis of primary source material on the Puritans' dealings with the tribes of New England. In it Vaughan argues that the Puritans treated the Indians in a fair and equitable manner, respected the Indians, and tried sincerely to win them over to English ways and beliefs. The problems that arose in 1675 as well as in 1637 should be blamed on the Indians themselves. Vaughan's analysis completely exonerates the Puritans from any charges of deceit and inhumanity that past writers had
leveled at them regarding their acquisitions of land and furs, and their administering of justice. The most obvious criticism of the book, that Vaughan had neglected to account for the actions of the Indians and that thus his book is one-sided, was anticipated by the author and dismissed. Initially the book met with a good reception, and only in the early 1970s did it come under increasing attack.

Vaughan wrote a self-assured study that went to the heart of his interpretations without any annoying sidetracks into areas where his themes might be cut off or blocked. There was no questioning the veracity of his sources to him, nor did he entertain the notion that they may be interpreted any other way correctly. Ironically, this reverence for past bastions of authority and truth appeared on the eve of a major new movement in American historiography that reflected the skepticism that the troubled and questioning Vietnam era brought to American society. Following European precedents, the advent of social history had a profound effect on the way many felt American history should be written. This interest in the individual in his society included renewed interest in the Native Americans of the colonial period. Historians wrote that the study of history could be seen as a "moral" or "liberal" science in which the search for truth is intertwined with "a commitment to some deeply held human values." Vaughan's work became a target for such critics.
In 1975 the scholastic resentment over Vaughan's book was summed up by a member of the moralist school, Francis Jennings, in *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*. Jennings perceives nothing less than two Puritan "conquests" of the New England Indians between 1634 and 1675, of which the conflict with the Pequots was the first. In Jennings's scenario, the founding of the Connecticut River and Providence colonies heightened Puritan land hunger and inaugurated a period during which all the New England colonies constantly struggled against the Indians and each other to maintain and expand their territories. He rejects outright traditional histories "that tell a different tale that need not be repeated here," and attacked Puritan writers such as John Winthrop (whose diaries and papers are among the few contemporary sources available for the period) for presenting "history with a slant." Jennings further notes that many of the documents concerning Indian affairs have disappeared, leaving Puritan interpretations "which are unlikely to be accurate representations of the vanished texts." He adds about Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for many years, that he probably rewrote the substance of the Indian treaties "to meet the Puritan's political and ideological needs, and then he or a devoted descendent destroyed the originals." Other Puritan writers and one nineteenth-century editor are included in what can only be seen as a wide conspiracy to
hide the truth about key events in the Puritan's dealings with the Indians. Jennings's animosity toward the Puritans pervades the book. "I have tried to practice restraint, but not concealment of my distaste." The Invasion of America met with praise for its approach concerning the Indian. It deliberately tried to convey to its readers a picture of Indian life and culture, and the changes in both due to European contact. In doing so Jennings followed the call of the Iroquian scholar William N. Fenton who wrote in 1957 that he wished to make the history of Indian-White relations "a common ground for history and ethnology." The study of "ethnohistory" slowly evolved during the 1950s and 1960s through the efforts of the American Society for Ethnohistory and through its journal Ethnohistory. Jennings's book is just one example of works published in the 1970s which uses ethnohistorical methods and terminology to redefine Indian-White relations throughout American history. While no standard definition of ethnohistory has been adopted, it may be best defined as "the use of historical methods and materials to gain knowledge of the nature and causes of change in a culture defined by ethnological concepts and categories." This is not to say that Jennings was entirely successful in his application of this approach. He succeeded in giving a good portrayal of Indian culture and life in Part I
of his book, but in Part II he failed in integrating that knowledge into the events of the time. While Alden Vaughan neglected the Indian throughout his book, Jennings forgot them through half his study. The book is Euro-centric, concentrating on what Jennings sees as the Puritan Leviathan destroying its way through native America. Jennings's Indians are incapable of independent thought or action. They merely react to Puritan initiatives and give token resistance to the omnipotent Puritan colonies who march to well-coordinated designs in their race to see who is first to brutalize the natives and take their lands. By placing his emphasis on the Puritans, Jennings unintentionally joins Vaughan in ignoring the Indian side to the events he narrates. In the final analysis, this book fails for the same reasons as does New England Frontier: a blindness to interpretation.

The original intent of this paper was to produce a balanced account of the entire war that took into consideration both Puritan and Indian viewpoints. During the preparation of this study, the first book of a proposed two-volume work has been published which attempts to provide this. Ideas in Neal Salisbury's Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643 coincide with some of the ideas found in this paper. However, because my area of concentration is on the origins of only the Pequot War, my approach and conclusions will differ somewhat from his. This paper will portray the
southern New England region at a time of great change and political flux. Major societal crises brought on by local and external factors struck both antagonists of the 1637 war at approximately the same time. The way each side perceived its own crisis goes a long way in explaining why each side acted as it did.

The Pequot Indians were hit by a series of setbacks starting about 1633. This included epidemic disease, a leadership crisis, the loss of its lucrative middleman position in the fur trade to New Amsterdam, a threat to its hegemony over eastern Connecticut by the founding of a series of English towns and posts along the Connecticut River, a cutoff of trade with its longtime ally the Dutch over a trading post incident, and a state of hostilities with the Narragansett Indians, the largest Indian group in southern New England. The Pequot answer to these problems was to seek accommodation rather than to risk war.

Massachusetts Bay came to the Connecticut River only after the Dutch and Plymouth colony laid claims to it. Initially the Bay colony sought only the rich fur trade of the area and not expansion. But internal strains caused by theological differences and the buildup of population in the early 1630s around Massachusetts Bay, which led to a subsequent scarcity of good land, became too great. Only when the Puritan leadership could no longer restrain their people did they agree to the migrations. The stretching of the
bonds of unity which characterized the Puritans' covenant ideology produced fears for the very existence and success of the Puritan experiment in the wilderness. The establishment of settlements that may be perceived to be outside the original boundaries set down by their charter brought a fear of intervention or revocation by the Stuart monarchy. The Puritan knowledge of the Connecticut River region was imperfect. Many saw the settlements as being isolated and exposed to possible Dutch and Indian attack. At the same time in Massachusetts Bay, the Antinomian Crisis posed a grave threat and took much of the attention of the Puritan authorities.

When the Pequot offers of alliance came, offers from the tribe that were thought to be the strongest in the Connecticut River region and longtime enemies of the local Massachusetts and more familiar Narragansett Indians, they were viewed with great suspicion by the Bay authorities. The Puritans' temperament, judgment, and values had been forged in the Old World bastions of their religion and then transferred nearly whole into the wilderness of America. They could understand the workings of these New World peoples no more than the Indians could understand the Puritans. Each side was ruled by its own world view. The confrontation of these two established systems produced a cultural gap neither side realized existed. Nor was it understood that the workings of politics and economics took
on very divergent meanings for each world view. No real attempt was made to understand the other. When problems arose, each side saw the solution by reasoning through themselves and their world view, accepting the resulting answer to be the truth, and acting on that premise. No thought was given that the other side might view it differently. As a result, neither side understood why the other acted as it did. Under this framework, what started out as an overture to peace ended as war.

There were other factors. Certainly a degree of racism or cultural differentiation existed in the Puritan psyche toward the Indian. What the Indian thought is not known. This did prove to be a factor in the Puritans' actions. But it is only part of a larger whole. The key is perception: of themselves, of each other, of their world and its workings. Negotiations were carried out in a fog of misconception for both sides. Ultimately the Pequot War and its aftermath helped to shape the framework in which Indian-White relations would be conducted not only in New England but, as the ancestors of those Europeans moved West, America as well.
Charles E. Orr, ed., History of the Pequot War: The Contemporary Accounts of Mason, Underhill, Vincent, and Gardner (Cleveland, OH: Helmes-Taylor, 1897), puts together the four contemporary accounts that deal with the war's execution. Leo Bonfanti, The Mohegan-Pequot War (Wakefield, MA: Pride Publications, 1971), is a popular account, lacking documentation of its sources and gives little analysis.


This paper will not include a comparison of the two conflicts. This judgment is based on the changed Puritan-Indian and Indian-Indian relationships that came as a result of the Pequot War and other factors unique to the 1675 war such as the longtime Dutch absence in the area, the implications of the failed "Praying Indian" experiment on the Puritan psyche, the heightened Indian technology in firearms, increased Puritan power due to numbers, and the 38 years between the wars in which Puritan attitudes toward the Indians hardened against them. Increased suspicion of Indian conspiracies led to greater colonial cooperation in military and Indian affairs. See Peter N. Carroll, Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 150-159. Following the pattern set in 1637, the use of Indian auxiliaries, including Pequots, and the neutrality of other Indian groups were instrumental in the Puritan victory.

The definition of a tribal group given by the ethnologist Anthony F. C. Wallace—that of one or more communities which act together as a political group possessing a name, territory, and a group decision-making mechanism—fits the workings of the towns comprising the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts, and the relationship between the

While Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were fur trade rivals, Plymouth invited Massachusetts Bay to join them on their 1633 venture to the Connecticut River. This was most likely to help insure the survival of an English post on the river in the face of possible Dutch and Indian threats. Dutch regularly called on Boston and Plymouth as did their ships on New Amsterdam. The Dutch and French refrained from trading guns with the Pequots, making their defeat much easier to accomplish.

The short-lived Massachusetts Bay-Pequot alliance of 1634 is one example. This was basically a trade agreement, but Boston did arrange a truce between the Pequots and Narragansetts, a truce the Pequots sought. The trade agreement came after the Pequots broke with their long-time Dutch trading partners. Massachusetts presented outrageous terms to the Pequots which were never formally accepted by the tribe. What resulted was an informal arrangement in which some trade was done. Both sides ignored the treaty until the killing of John Oldham, and the changed political scene in Connecticut brought the matter to the fore.


15 "... by necessity as well as inclination, I have concentrated on the acts and attitudes of the Puritans toward the Indians and have not, for the most part, attempted to account for the actions and reactions of the natives" (ibid., p. viii).

16 New England Frontier was reissued in paperback in 1979 by Norton & Co., and Vaughan wrote a new introduction which is his answer to the criticism his book has met since the 1970s. (I remember a librarian at the Colonial Indian Research Center in Old Mystic, Connecticut, literally turn a boiling red at the mention of Vaughan's name.) In this introduction, Vaughan admits "I too have long harbored dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the book" and "I may have overargued my case . . .," ibid., p. xi. However, "the text remains essentially the same" due to the economic realities of the publishing industry," ibid. He does point out that his 1964 article on the Pequot War differed from his book on how much the Pequots should be blamed for the war, and that now "I am less sure than I was 15 years ago that the Pequots deserve the burden of the blame," ibid., p. xxiv. Yet while he claims he has altered the book to correct the balance, a close reading shows Vaughan has not retreated the least on assigning the blame for the war on the Pequots.


18 The best example of this is Peter Laslett, The World We Have Lost, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1972).


23 Jennings, Invasion of America, p. xi: "I have made the assumption that human persons do have some power of choice over their own conduct and that their adherence to moral standards, whatever these standards may be, is a matter of historical concern."

24 Ibid, pp. 177-178.

Winthrop papers has been published: Allyn B. Forbes, ed., The Winthrop Papers, 5 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-1947). Many of these had been earlier published in various volumes of the Massachusetts Historical Society Collections.


27 Jennings, Invasion of America, p. 182.


30 See Jennings, Invasion of America, pp. viii, 13, and the articles by Martin and Axtell cited above.

31 Jennings, Invasion of America, p. 13.

32 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).
G. E. Thomas, "Puritans, Indians, and the Concept of Race," New England Quarterly 48 (March 1975), pp. 26-27, writes that "it is clear that Puritan attitudes toward Indians were complex" and that a strong current of antagonism was fundamental in those attitudes which involved more than race. "Nevertheless, racial characteristics proved to be the one insurmountable barrier." However, as Jennings points out in Invasion of America, p. 22, racism also demands a moral superiority for which biological traits serve only as visual distinctions in which to differentiate from. The Puritan's emphasis on civilization and Christianity over savagery and devil-worshiping became itself a powerful type of racism. This cultural racism was not only characteristic of the Puritans in New England. See John Henrik Clark, "Race: An Evolving Issue in Western Social Thought," Journal of Human Relations 18 (3) 1970, 1040-1054, particularly, pp. 1042 and 1044; G. V. Scammell, The World Encompassed: The First European Maritime Empires, 800-1600 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). Works which in part explore this theme in Indian-Puritan relations include: Ronald Sanders, Lost Tribes and Promised Lands: The Origins of American Racism (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974); Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); Wilbur R. Jacobs, Disposing the Indian: Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1972); Richard Drinnon, Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Frederick Turner, Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness (New York: Viking Press, 1980); Richard Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Anglo-Saxonism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

CHAPTER I
BEFORE THE DELUGE

Time has not stood still in eastern Connecticut. The remnants of the Industrial Revolution, gutted and decaying textile mills, dot the landscape around the area's watercourses. On the banks of the Thames River, modern industry occupies some of the sturdier of these relics of a bygone era. Rusted railroad tracks line both sides of the river, from its mouth which empties into Long Island Sound to the junction with the Yantic and Shetucket Rivers north of Norwich, the old homeground of the Mohegan Indians. Downriver at New London Harbor, pleasure craft, barges, and submarines vie for space where once clipper ships and whalers made ready to sail out into the Atlantic and the world. Early maps of New London record the city's name as Pequot, named for the Indians who kept a summer village there and across the river where present Groton sprawls out into the Sound. Inland from the coast, rolling hills and gentle valleys are home to a variety of trees, from the stately white pines and maples of the north to native oaks and cedars along the shoreline. Brooks and small rivers intersect the green landscape, intermixed with boulders and sandplains left by the last great glacier to visit the area.\(^1\) Stone walls, some over 300 years
old, mark boundaries to farms that no longer exist. Ancient footpaths, still visible today, testify to the industry of generations of both man and beast in sliding single file through the forest. The descendents of some of the Native Americans who walked those paths still live in the area. Remnants of the Pequot Indians reside on two small 'reservations' administered by the state of Connecticut, at Lantern Hill in North Stonington, and Mushantuxet in Ledyard. Across the Thames on Mohegan Hill, a few Mohegans remain today, centered around the Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum and the old Congregational Church.

The natural resources of southern New England attracted man early to the region. Many game and fur-bearing animals roamed the woods. The waters teemed with life. Plants thrived in the rocky but fertile soil. By the time of European contact, Indian life had been long established. The Algonquian-speaking inhabitants of the area formed part of a large, distinct cultural area that existed throughout the northeast and east central part of North America. The southern New England portion of this region could be easily distinguished from surrounding areas by the sharp decline of horticulture to the north and linguistic differences along all its borders. Lowlands and broad river valleys were, as today, the most densely populated. The people lived in semi-permanent villages, surrounded by extensive gardens which
bordered the shallows and tidal streams. Agricultural lands were cleared of brush and small trees through the use of slash-and-burn techniques. Crops consisted of squash, beans and, in particular, corn. In the spring after the corn had been planted, the greater part of the people moved into temporary camps along the coast or the fall line of rivers. Their summer was passed fishing and gathering quantities of shellfish and drying a portion for winter consumption. In the fall, they returned to their original villages to harvest the corn and other domesticated plants. Autumn was spent firing the underbrush in their annual burnings to prepare for next year's planting and in gathering edible wild foods. Communal hunting drives occurred. In late autumn, northern groups moved to their hunting grounds along the upper river courses, frequently camping in rock shelters and spending winter there. Others moved to their winter quarters deep in the forest. Spring brought the annual fish runs, and the cycle began anew.

Exactly how these peoples were organized politically and territorially has become a matter for controversy and revision. European designations of Indian groups contacted were described using western terminology, such as "kingdom," and assigned names that could be understood only by the recorder of the event. The most widely accepted picture of pre-contact New England shows a society that consisted of small socio-political units, or bands, formed by a number of
extended families. Water routes and kinship ties linked the units together, while more formal political ties may have existed with other groups because of their leaders being intermarried. The agricultural economy with its greater capacity to support large numbers of people through stored food surpluses may have helped to evolve more complex societies in which constituent bands institutionalized their ethnic commonality by increased communication and through meetings in order to concert joint subsistence actions and other activities such as warfare or forming a ruling council to decide on intra-unit activities. This consolidation of interests ultimately led to linguistic differences between related but unconnected groups. This partially explains the many related but distinct dialects of southern New England.16

Social organization centered around the village because it was the basic subsistence unit. A titular head called a sachem or sagamore ruled along with a council composed of the "great men" or leaders of the band. Sachems had limited coercive power, and maintained influence through generosity and persuasion. Evidence indicates the position was hereditary, but exactly how the holder of that position was determined is unclear. Important decisions could only be reached through a consensus of the council and the village. Sachems who acted privately or with others against the wishes of the village soon found their actions repudiated or ignored.17
A similar system prevailed in the multi-village political organization. A sachem ruled with a group of sub-sachems from the villages in which a consensus had to be reached before collective action could be taken. The idea of tribal unity comes from this large, firmly-knit group of bands acting together in collective action in a permanent arrangement. This included a group territory, usually consisting of band lands around a river system. Boundaries were marked off by watersheds, fall lines of rivers, or the sea. Coastal group territories tended to be smaller due to the heavier dependency on aquatic life as a food source. One major agricultural settlement became the seat of government. The sachem resided in this main village. He and the council met there, and it was where treaties were usually negotiated and important trade conducted, though other villages served the latter purpose as well.

Some villages and tribes were linked to larger alliances through marriage, trade or military necessity. These relationships, based on reciprocity of benefits, could solidify into a permanent alliance. This helps to explain the large ethnic confederacies which characterized much of the eastern United States. It is possible that bands, villages, or even small tribes were allied with more than one larger group through less formal alliances of marriage, trade, or by the tribute system, in which weaker groups symbolized their
subservience to larger groups through a wampum payment. In some cases this could lead to the adoption and assimilation of the weaker group by the stronger. It also could lead to a contest for the weaker group among two or more larger groups for economic or territorial gain.\textsuperscript{18}

"Columbus did not discover the New World. He established contact between two worlds both already old," sums up one historian of the European age of exploration.\textsuperscript{19} In southern New England this was no less true. An established political and economic equilibrium existed between the various groups there that changed only with the European intrusion into the region.
CHAPTER I ENDNOTES


3 The area contained one of the highest Indian populations per square mile north of Mexico. Exact figures are a matter of great controversy. See H. E. Driver and W. C. Massey, "Comparative Studies of North American Indians,"


4 No full-blood Indians of any Connecticut tribe exist today. The Mystic [Connecticut] Compass, November 25, 1975, reported less than 600 individuals could claim any descent from the Pequot group at that time. The figure must also include Indians later known as Mohegans. For the number still living on the reservations and around the state, see Mary E. Gillette, American Indians in Connecticut: Past and Present, Connecticut Indian Affairs Council (Hartford: Department of Environmental Protection, 1979). The Tantquidgeon family are descendants of Tantiquieson, a Mohegan captain to Uncas; see Speck, "Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut," p. 209.

5 The earliest conclusive evidence for man in Connecticut has been estimated between 10,000 to 12,500 years ago. See Gillette, American Indians in Connecticut, p. 1; and Snow, Archaeology of New England, p. 150. A discovery on the Shepaug River in the northwest corner of Connecticut places it at 12,000; New York Times, August 29, 1977. Members of the Archaeological Society of Southeastern Connecticut have recently found a cremation site containing the oldest relic ever found in the area, dating 4,000 years ago, at Old Lyme, Connecticut. In private conversation, members feel older relics are yet to be found. See New London Day, June 24, 1981.


Weatherwax, Indian Corn in Old America (New York: Macmillan, 1954); Carl L. Johannessen, Michael R. Wilson, and William A. Davenport, "The Domestication of Maize: Process or Event?" Geographical Review 60 (July 1970), 393-413.


13 Brasser, "Coastal Algonquins," p. 65; Williams, A Key to the Language, p. 46; Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island," p. 160. In September 1606 during Samuel De Champlain's second landing on Cape Ann, southern Cape Cod, he and his men witnessed the autumn subsistence cycle of the Indians. What followed can be taken as a premonition of things to come. The packing up of houses and people prior to the move inland was


15 "A specific Indian group referred to in a colonial document may be an ethnic unit, a village name, a river name, a personal name, a kin unit, a cluster of refugees, a complete fabrication, or a slip of the pen," Snow, Archaeology of New England, p. 4; Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island," pp. 167-168; Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, p. 48.


It was said that the Pequot sachem Sassacus controlled twenty-six subchiefs. Many of these must have been through the tribute system. Winthrop's Journal Hosmer, ed., 1:227. The tribute system and the use of wampum, strung white and blue shells used by the Indians for a variety of purposes, will be discussed below. The idea of reciprocity has been taken by Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, p. 48, to justify the splitting up of a tribe if it is believed by that segment that it no longer enjoys the benefits of the alliance. He considers the Europeans' lack of reciprocity in their dealings with the natives as a major theme of Indian-White relations in New England. Both will be discussed below.

CHAPTER II
THE MEETING OF THE "WORLDS"

The Intellectual Background

Throughout the Middle Ages tales persisted of lands being reached by sailing west from Europe. The Atlantic Ocean held a plethora of mystic and magical isles such as Antilia, Brasil, San Zorro, Santanzes, and Thule. Beyond these was thought to lie the equatorial continent of Antipodes where the land's proximity to the sun brought such heat that no man could survive there. More optimistic would-be travellers discounted this and believed instead that golden Ophir, an island thought to be off the shores of fabled India, could be reached. Stories of Prestor John, the Christian king of Asia, and the riches of the Great Khan of Cathay thrilled Europeans. They speculated in fantasy-filled dreams of the glories of these lands and of their people. This did not change after Columbus finally contacted and brought back inhabitants of these western lands. Even when it became clear by the early sixteenth century that the lands were not Asia but a previously unknown "world," Europeans were slow to react to the news. Misconception grew instead of diminished as the Old World of Europe continued to view the New World through a screening process which blocked out the unfamiliar and exotic for the believable and accepted.¹
The earliest impressions of the Americas were para-disaic. This view would not change for centuries. Perceptions about its inhabitants, however, split as reports came to Europe. These accounts, alongside those now received from Africa and Asia, were widely and enthusiastically read all over the continent. The Renaissance curiosity of man did not have an equivalent to modern anthropology to structure this new knowledge into a coherent field of study. Accurate observations of non-European man remained scarce. Travel literature gave few specifics on the cultures of the new peoples found. The exotic and fanciful replaced the mundane in these accounts that were published more for entertainment than science.²

The impressions transmitted to readers gave an overall unflattering view of the New World peoples. The practices of Meso-American human sacrifice and West Indian cannibalism reported by the Spaniards brought revulsion to the European reader. Images of the Indians as beasts drew on legends of wild men and monsters already prevalent in western European intellectual traditions. Reinforcement came from the biases against non-European man as being primitive and savage, living without the restraints of just law and God. Yet a conflicting theme arose that had its foundations in the idea of the New World being a paradise. For while these people were viewed as only semi-human, they did participate
in the common human inheritance of God's universe. They lived in the premordial paradise all the world once was. Some saw in the Indians a gentleness and natural goodness untouched by Old World vices and corruption. What the Indian needed to make him perfect was the preaching of the Gospel and conversion to the Christian faith. As Europeans explored and colonized the New World, the edict of carrying Christianity to the unknowing masses there became a major stated and unstated reason for its endeavors.3

The Spanish Pope Alexander VI quickly granted Spain title to the new lands by Papal Bulls. Protests from Portuguese officials, who saw their own voyages to Asia by sailing east around Africa jeopardized, brought about a Papal compromise. This failed to soothe the Portuguese who worked out an agreement with Spain that divided the world between the two Iberian states.4 For the next hundred years the West Indies, Mexico, and South America became the hub of European activity in the New World. In the North Atlantic, however, voyages occurred which involved other European nations not included in the Iberian treaty.

The exploration of the Atlantic coast of North America until 1600 was a sporadic affair. The earliest sustained voyages to the area were made by fishermen and itinerant merchants looking to trade with one of the mythical Atlantic islands.5 By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the
Grand Banks area off Newfoundland had lured boats from Portugal, Bordeaux and Bayonne in France, Devonshire, Dorset and Bristol in England, and from the Basque coastal cities of St. Jean du Luz and San Sebastian. The possibility of a northwest passage to Asia led to the first full exploratory mission to the area, that of the Italian John Cabot who sailed under the flag of Henry VII of England in 1498. After several more attempts were made to find the passage, however, lack of results cooled the ardor or the austerity-minded Tudors and English voyages to the area dropped off. In 1524 the French commissioned another Italian, Giovanni da Varrazzano, who became the first European captain to chart the coast of New England. The French failed to follow up this voyage, concentrating instead on the northern wilds of Canada.

The beginning of the seventeenth century brought a concerted effort by several countries to explore and chart the region. French and English voyages visited all along the New England coast. By that time they were joined by a third rival. The new republic of the Netherlands would become the first European nation to establish a presence in southern New England.

The Dutch

The Dutch came late to the New World. The long struggle for independence from Spain hindered their efforts. More
importantly, unlike their European counterparts, the Dutch expressed little interest in the New World fisheries because of the rich herring schools in the North Sea. This viewpoint changed as Dutch merchants began to expand their interests all through Europe and into the Mediterranean market. They found that a brisk trade existed there for a commodity they lacked, Newfoundland Codfish. Rather than be shut out of the lucrative southern trade, the Dutch decided to enter the New World fisheries. They did this by not introducing another fishing fleet into the already crowded waters off Newfoundland, but by establishing a trade with the fishermen already there. While doing so, they entered another trade that would prove to be the reason for almost all the subsequent voyages to the shores of America, the fur trade.  

Licenses issued to navigators and merchants who sailed for the New World usually included in their clauses the objective of discovering the Northwest Passage to the Orient which geographers believed existed. It was on such a mission that the Englishman Henry Hudson, sailing under the flag of the Dutch republic, gave Amsterdam its claim to the rich hinterlands of New York and western New England in 1609. Barely a year passed before the first influx of traders arrived on the North (Hudson) River in two ships under Jan Cornelius May to exploit the discovery. More followed. Two
stations were built, one on Manhattan Island, and the other up the river, just south of present Albany. From these bases the Dutch began explorations in search of furs.10

In March 1614, the States General of the United Netherlands promised by general ordinances that discoverors of new lands should, upon reporting their discoveries, be given a monopoly of trade for a period of four voyages within those areas.11 An ambitious ex-lawyer-turned-navigator saw the possibilities of the situation. Adriaen Block was a veteran of the trip to the Hudson, having gone there in 1611 and twice more after that. Block secured the captaincy of the barque Tiger in a four-ship flotilla organized by a group of Amsterdam merchants who hoped to trade along and chart the coastline east of the Manhattan Island base. The plan called for Jan Cornelius May to explore the south coast of Long Island, Hendrick Corstiaenses the east coast of New England, and Block the southern coast of Connecticut.12

The plan ran into trouble early. While in the lower bay off Manhattan Island, Block's boat apparently burned by accident. Earlier a falling out had occurred with the other captains over the share of furs each would receive at the mission's end. Both sailed away leaving Block to take shelter with some local Indians. Undaunted, Block and his crew built the first documented European-style vessel constructed in the New World, the eight-mast yacht Onrust.
(Restless). Block completed his mission of exploring the coastline to the east, trading as he went. He ultimately arrived off Cape Cod where he again met up with Corstiaensen. The Onrust was left to trade while Block returned to the Netherlands with Corstiaensen. The ship later made another voyage along the New England coast, this time under Cornelius Hendricksz on his way back from discovering the Delaware River in 1616.

It is important to recount Block's voyage, as it gives us the best view of native pre-contact southern New England. Block sailed north-northeast along Long Island Sound. He passed a group of islands off present Norwalk, Connecticut, and noticed a large river he named the River of Red Mountain (the Housatonic). He kept his course along the shore until he came to a major river he named the Versche (the Connecticut). Despite the shallows at its mouth, he sailed up the river fifteen leagues until he met his first natives whom he called the Sequins. Journeying further up the river he came upon a fortified village at 41°48' occupied by a group he called the Nawaas. He traded for a time there before descending back down the river and into the Sound. He resumed his course until he came to a river he called the Frisius, where he met a group he called the Morhicans. He stopped at one more river before he sailed into Narragansett Bay. He named it "the river of Siccananos after the name of
the Sagamos. The people who dwell on this river...are called the Pequatoos and are enemies of the Wapanos. Before entering Narragansett Bay he spied a small island off the tip of Long Island and named it Adriaenbloxyland after himself. This was later shortened by the English to Block Island.

Block may have met members of the Pequot Indians, or their allies, as many as four times. Sadly, the record is not clear. Block's original journal was lost, and the account that survives may have been jumbled with the logs of other captains who sailed the waters off New Netherland.

On October 11, 1614, the merchants of North Holland and Amsterdam who underwrote these New World voyages obtained a monopoly of trade for the area 40-45 degrees north latitude. They named the region New Netherland, and the monopoly continued until its legal life terminated on January 1, 1618 without the merchants immediately asking for its renewal. The reason for this hesitance involved powerful political and economic forces within the Dutch republic. Suggestions had been made earlier for the formation of a chartered company similar to the United Netherlands East India Company to foster trade and settlement in the New World. This would insure the Dutch claims to the area in the eyes of Europe. However, the twelve year truce with Spain prohibited this. The powerful minister Oldenbarneveld blocked consideration of the idea. Backers of the plan had to wait until the fall of
Oldenbarneveld and the resumption of hostilities with Spain in 1619 before discussion began again on its merits. In anticipation of that time, the East India Company approached Dutch citizens with the idea of emigrating to America, but found few takers.  

The West India Company received its charter on June 3, 1621. The purpose of the organization was to take the offensive against the Iberian nations in the West Indies and Brazil and not specifically to settle New Netherland. Traders sailed for New England and the Hudson, but it took until 1625 before the first settlers arrived.  

It soon became apparent to the Dutch government that the company had been ignoring certain charter provisions for establishing colonies in the New World. Only a token force, at that time mainly fur traders, inhabited New Netherland. The government's answer was to introduce the Middle Ages to the New World in the form of the patroon system to attract more settlers to the area. By this time, New Plymouth had long been in existence, and a new wave of Puritan settlement was about to hit the New World.  

The reason the Dutch never settled New England involved the fur trade. As one historian has written, "the fur trade was to New Netherland what tobacco was to Virginia." Southern New England became a fringe area as the trade prospered around the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. Yet initially
the trade grew rapidly over the area, with ships regularly visiting Cape Cod, Narragansett Bay, the Thames, and the Connecticut. New Plymouth's first ventures outside its coastal enclave failed because the Indians were better supplied by the Dutch and refused to barter for what they saw as Plymouth's inferior goods.\(^{24}\)

New Netherland and Plymouth maintained good, if not friendly official relations in New England. However, Plymouth did warn the Dutch to stay out of Cape Cod and Narragansett Bay.\(^{25}\) Plymouth officials received Isaac de Rasieres, the Secretary of New Netherland, on a goodwill visit in 1627.\(^{26}\) The establishment of the Massachusetts Bay colony did not change this. Despite the English presence, Dutch posts were maintained in southern New England well into the 1640s. Competition may have been tempered by the fact that the region's supply of furs, never great, quickly disappeared.\(^{27}\)

Dutch treatment of the Indians in southern New England appears to have been better than that given to the Indians of New Netherland.\(^{28}\) After an early incident involving the kidnapping and ransoming of a Pequot sachem for 140 fathoms of wampum, the Dutch and Indians settled down to amicable relations.\(^{29}\) The Dutch enjoyed a monopoly of trade on the Connecticut, and founded posts in Narragansett territory and at Pequot. The only contacts the Indians had with Europeans
were these scattered traders who came and went, as the posts were usually not manned the year around. Indian middlemen, particularly the Pequot, handled the bulk of the trade for the Dutch. The tribe had an available supply of wampum, the currency of the trade, which enabled them to establish an economic and political hegemony over the eastern part of Connecticut and into Rhode Island. No doubt their position was envied by the powerful Narragansetts, who may not have been able to secure Dutch backing due to the latter's fear of disrupting the smoothly running system.

The entrance of the Puritans changed this. New power balances formed as weaker groups sought to play the Europeans off one another, and off the dominant Indian groups in the area. All the Indians failed to realize that, unlike the Dutch, the English had come to stay. The Dutch decision not to oppose the building of the English posts and towns isolated their Indian allies who now found they had to accommodate themselves to the English presence. The Dutch were too weak to stop the English. When hostilities began in Connecticut, the Dutch traders remained neutral. No action construed to be supportive of the Indians occurred. Ironically, they had earlier helped to pave the way for English colonization. In 1634 a group of fur traders brought a disease, probably smallpox, to the vicinity where the Connecticut River towns were later founded. Out of an estimated one thousand Indians who live there, fifty survived.
The Destoryers

There is little ethnographical information on the Pequot Indians of eastern Connecticut as is the case for most of the New England Indian groups. This is especially true for the Pequot because the colonial authorities passed a harsh judgement on the defeated tribe in 1638. Surviving tribal members were divided out as booty to the major pro-English Indian groups or were sold to English colonists in New England and the West Indies as slaves. Laws passed made it illegal for any Indian to call himself Pequot or settle on old tribal lands. Though dispersed and persecuted, members of the old tribe did later resettle on some of their old territory. Colonial and state records continued to refer to these people as Pequots.

The established, once universally held, theory on the origin of the Pequots have the group migrating to southern New England just before the English came to the Connecticut River. This comes from a Mohegan tradition of a northwest migration to the area reminiscent of the Mahican legends mentioned in the Walum Olam. Legend has the "Gray Fox" or "Wolves" clan coming to eastern Connecticut from the upper Hudson River sometime at the end of the sixteenth century. They were led by Tamaquasad, a direct descendent of the last Pequot sachem before the 1637 war.

Subsequent writers have attributed a pace for this group
that is remarkable for any migration. The tribe either came down the Hudson or crossed directly into Connecticut. Once at the Connecticut River they either fought three major battles with the Sequins, went down the river or skipped over to the Thames and Mystic Rivers. While doing so they scattered the Nipmuck groups in the area, split the Niantic Indians, and extended their hegemony over all the Connecticut River groups. At some time they also made vassals out of the tribes on Long Island, and pushed the eastern Niantic into Narragansett territory as far as the Wecaupog River. Exactly how and when this all occurred is never stated. Small wonder the Puritan writers attribute such savagery in war to them.

This theory is not back by any shred of evidence other than oral legend. All available evidence points instead to a regional development within southern New England. Linguistically the "Y" dialect spoken by the Pequot-Mohegan-Montauk (a Long Island group) seems like an intermediary dialect between the "N" and the still larger "R" groups once identified under the Wappinger-Mattabesec confederacies to the west. All of these dialects are far removed from that spoken by the Mahican of the Hudson River. Archaeologically, pottery finds indicate a distinct similarity to those found in Long Island and Narragansett finds. The Shantock Cove site near New London, Connecticut dates to ca. 770, and supports the in-place development of historic Pequot culture.
The tales of conquest and the sphere-of-influence attributed to the Pequots make more sense if they came to be realized over a period of time greater than the few decades suggested by most writers. It also helps to explain their unwillingness to concede their rights of action to the Dutch or Puritans in an area that they deemed was rightfully theirs.

A most important factor in the defeat of the Pequots in 1637 was the role of Uncas and the Mohegan Indians. A Dutch map reported to have been drawn in 1616 lists the name Morchican in the area in which Adriaen Block says he met them in 1614. Yet this placement does not make sense in light of subsequent history concerning them. In 1633 the Pequots broke from their ally the Dutch over a trading post incident. In retaliation, the Dutch killed the Pequot sachem Tatobem. A power struggle ensued over which of the chief candidates for sachem should get the post. Tatobem's son Sassacus won the right over his cousin, Uncas. Twice Uncas tried to overthrow Sassacus, was forced to flee, and was eventually forgiven and accepted back into the tribe. On the third time, Uncas was banished. Uncas on all three occasions escaped to the Narragansett country to the east, not the coastline to the west as the map states the Mohegan were to be found. He was later reported to have gathered a group of Indians from the river bands and to have settled near present
Hartford. Uncas later claimed his homeground to be on the Thames River above Norwich, near Yantic. Again, this differs from the early map. This may be due to a cartographical error, or because Mohegan may be a clan name, a family name, or simply an Indian place name that has no political significance. Mohegan may simply have been the name the pro-Uncan faction called itself in order to distinguish them from the main body of the Pequot tribe now at war with the Europeans. 42

Disease and population figures are important to consider when trying to piece together a profile of the tribe in the 1630s. Native population figures for New England vary greatly. 43 Recent estimates for the 1630s have the Indians vastly outnumbering the Europeans before and after contact. However, modern estimates based on the reliability of figures supplied by early writers should be taken with caution. This is one historian's summary of John Winthrop's claim that the Connecticut River Indians could muster three to four thousand warriors:

This passage was penned in 1633 when the New England colonists had yet extended beyond Massachusetts Bay; when an impassable bar was reported to exist at the mouth of the Connecticut; when it was said that, during seven months of the year, no vessel could enter it on account of the ice and violence of the stream; and when the Connecticut, with the Hudson, the Potomac, and other large rivers were supposed to take their rise together out of some huge lake, or some hideous swamp in the north. Such was the knowledge of the English at the time, respecting the country; and
very similar no doubt was their information concerning the numbers of its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{44}

It should be added to this that New England was reported to be an island by the Puritans as late as 1674.\textsuperscript{45}

Estimates on the population of the Pequot, before and after contact, vary greatly. Many writers quote the figure of four thousand warriors supplied in 1674 by Daniel Gookin, superintendent of the Indians of Massachusetts Bay. This figure may be too high. Gookin wrote his account almost forty years after the war, and depended heavily on Indian informants and on estimates supplied by contemporary writers who never saw Connecticut, much less the Pequots. A more accurate figure, which includes other Indians assimilated into the Pequot, would be five thousand souls with between six hundred and seven hundred warriors included in the sum. How much disease and defection lessened this total can not be ascertained with certainty. It is known that Indian auxiliaries bolstered the Pequot numbers during their raid on Wethersfield and probably the fighting before Fort Saybrook in 1637.\textsuperscript{46}

Disease played an important role in the English colonizing of New England. The susceptibility of the Indian to European diseases stems from their relatively isolated development in the New World. No tolerances existed to the germs to which carrier Europeans had long grown immune due
to long-time exposure in the Old World. In 1616-1617 the first major pestilence recorded in New England swept the woods. The Puritans who benefitted saw the hand of God clearing the land "of those pernicious creatures to make room for better growth." Indian medicinal practices helped to exacerbate the problem. The sick were usually visited by a great number of the group who then spread the disease further among themselves. The touching of the infected dead during preparation before burial helped to transmit the disease further. As the epidemics became more common, the mere mention of disease would empty whole villages. Epidemics hit the New England region in 1621-22, 1631-32, and 1633-34. Unless a European trader was nearby, no one recorded the destruction that occurred. How many times disease touched the Pequot tribe is unknown. They disclosed to the English that it had in 1634. This may have been the most important reason for the tribe seeking an alliance with the English that year.

How far Pequot hegemony extended must be dealt with in order to understand the Pequot position in the 1630s. When Sassacus took over as head sachem, his tribute (wampum) collecting authority encompassed eastern Connecticut to the Connecticut River, Long Island, the eastern most parts of Rhode Island, and the islands off the coast, including Block Island. It is not clear how this system worked, but
it may have been a satellite or dependency relationship. Under this system, the land of a subject people passed under the authority of the control group even while living on the land. They were expected to acknowledge the leadership of the control group in major matters of war, trade, and diplomacy for the privilege of co-owning the territory and the protection of the dominant tribe. The basis of this system was not so much conquest as the reciprocal exchanges of rights and favors, even if conquest originated the agreement. This arrangement mirrored the way an individual band organized its own land allotment system. The group had exclusive ownership (use, claim) from a common inheritance from their ancestors. This was held in trust for the group by the leader or leaders. The group paid tribute in exchange for the leader allowing his people to share in the usufruct of the land.52

The fur trade changed this system to the degree that relations between the groups became more complex as each group became more conscious of its boundaries. This superficial similarity to Old World land tenure led Europeans to believe the two systems were identical. They did not seek to comprehend the complexities which distinguished the native system from their own. Europeans assumed the people who lived on a particular piece of property "owned" it, not shared it. Large tracts of land were "sold" by individual
Indians who had no real ownership or rights to dispose of the land. The Indians assumed the European payment was simply tribute being paid for the land's use. They did not understand that the European idea of private property prohibited the seller from ever using the land again. Incidents of Indians being forced off their lands by angry Europeans became common. And as European land hunger grew, more and more Indian groups were forced off their lands or killed. Misconception over each other's customs led to suspicion, hostility, and war.53

England and the Founding of Connecticut

England's claim to the New World had as its basis the 1497 and 1498 voyages of John Cabot. In a world split by Papal dispensation, Henry VII gave his navigator the power to discover and subdue "all islands and countries not in the possession of any Christian power." So little was known of the New World then that Henry still imagined that the Kingdom of Prester John, the Christian, could be reached by sailing west. When succeeding voyages failed to produce any tangible results, Henry turned his attention back to consolidating Tudor rule and the number of voyages dropped. Interest rose again during the reign of Henry VIII, but not until the 1550s and the marriage of Mary Tudor to Philip II of Spain did English merchants begin to stockpile information about the New World.54
In 1578 Elizabeth I intensified this effort by granting the first royal charter in the New World to Sir Humphrey Gilbert. In it the exclusive right "to inhabit and possess" at his choice "all remote and heathen lands not in the actual possession of any Christian prince" was given. Elizabeth aimed the phrase "actual possession" at the heart of the Papal Bulls and Spain's claim to the New World. No longer mere discovery, but physical occupation was required to have a valid claim in the eyes of England.  

Several factors spurred England's New World expansion. Her long maritime tradition supplied the men, ships, and technology needed to make the voyages. Culturally, the people's attention and imagination were held by works like Sir Thomas More's Utopia, only the foremost of many works published about the New World before 1550. This curiosity continued throughout the century and into the next as William Shakespeare's The Tempest attests. The Renaissance cult of the individual found a home in Elizabeth's court, and produced an adventurism that found expression in voyages against the Spanish in Europe and the West Indies. Political and economic theses joined to produce a series of promoters, propagandists, and explorers who caught the imagination of the populace and the monarch. Richard Eden, Edward Hayes, the Hakluyts, the Gilberts, Samuel Purchas, Francis Drake, and Walter Raleigh are just some of the individuals who
fostered overseas interests. Humphrey's attempt to exercise his rights failed miserably on the storm-swept coast of Newfoundland in 1583. On the trip back to England, he was lost at sea. His rights and charter passed on to his half-brother Sir Walter Raleigh who envisioned an American empire for England similar to Spain's. Several attempts were made to plant colonies on the mainland of America, called Virginia after the virgin queen, but these proved unsuccessful. Raleigh then turned his attentions to South America, and activity in North America ceased till the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The death of Elizabeth and the rise of the Stuart monarchy brought new interest in Virginia. Several voyages left for Norembaga, or the "North Part of Virginia," in the early years of the seventeenth century. Conflicts over who held the rights to these areas became so great that James I had to settle the matter by royal charter in 1606. Two companies received privileges. James gave a company backed in London permission to plant a colony between 34 and 41 degrees north latitude in Virginia. This group eventually settled Jamestown in 1607. A group composed of monied interests from Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth, called the Plymouth Company, attained permission to plant in the area of New England, 40 to 45 degrees north latitude.

58
59
60
In 1620 this northern group petitioned to be reorganized due to infighting among themselves and financial problems. King James I decided to dissolve the old company and to incorporate by patent forty lords headed by Lord Warwick into a new company. He gave them permission to plant colonies between 40 and 48 degrees north latitude. Officially known as the "Council Established at Plymouth in the County of Devon for the Planting, Ruling, and Governing of New-England in America," this group was responsible for the peopling of New England.61

The Warwick group must also claim responsibility for the ambiguity concerning specific English rights to the Connecticut River region. Dissidents within the company procured several patents giving land rights to the region that inevitably was settled by the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629. That patent allowed the company a strip of land running sea to sea with a northward limit of three miles north of the Merrimac River and a southern boundary three miles south of the Charles. Because of this development, another patent had to be issued to the Plymouth colony to redefine its territorial rights and authority so no conflict would arise. None of these patents mentioned with certainty the area of the Connecticut River.62

Only one patent survives that concerns itself with Connecticut. Issued on March 19, 1631/32 from Lord Warwick
and given to Lords Seal, Say, Brooks, and Rich, among others, it stated that "all that part of New England in America which lies and extends itself from a river there called Narragansett River, the space of 40 leagues upon a straight line near the sea shore, towards the southwest, west, and south and west as the coast lieth toward Virginia...from the Western Ocean to the South sea..." could be colonized by them. The later Connecticut River colony based its government on this patent. Yet even that government was so unsure about the patent's legitimacy that John Winthrop, Jr. had to be sent to England in 1644 to find out if the patent ever existed. It is probable Warwick had no power to issue this patent in the first place.63

The ambiguous claims to the area of the Connecticut River made its colonization difficult to justify by today's law. The Dutch claimed the area as an inheritance from the Spanish king,64 the English by discovery, and the Pequot by political custom. Ultimately, religious and economic elements in the Puritan movement in England in America settled the issues.

"Saints" in New England

The familiar stories of the founding of the Puritan colonies in Massachusetts will not be retold here. Many good accounts are available concerning these dissidents from the Anglican Church who left England for the wilds of New England.
This sketch will concern itself with a few points pertinent to Puritan attitudes toward the Indian.\(^5\)

The initial migrations to New England were largely composed of the regenerative elect of the church who pioneered an "errand into the wilderness" for God's church on earth. However, there followed many who were not of a like mind. The Puritan conversion morphology restricted church membership but not migration. Many who emigrated to New England resented the way the colonies and churches were run. Religious and political factionalism resulted. These people were not unearthly saints, but English men and women with the same basic perceptions they held at home. This clinging to Old World views explains in part why they could not adapt readily to New World Puritanism or its realities.\(^6\)

There can be no doubt that the wilderness of the New World played a major role in the Puritans' perceptions of the Indians and the land.\(^7\) What should be remembered is that the Puritans came to America with pre-conceived notions of New World lands and peoples that had been formulated back in England. The influence of promotional literature and their own personal expectations placed the wilderness in a traditional and familiar world view that did not change immediately upon arrival. Early eyewitnesses of the New World had given a more optimistic view of the Indian and his
culture than the views of those who had stayed in Europe and dismissed Indian culture as savage and brutal. Once in the New World, the menacing strangeness of the wilderness readily brought the latter view of the minds of many of the recent immigrants to New England. The threat of armed conflict with the Indians which grew from these perceptions, helped to keep the settlements close to each other initially. However, as more settlers landed, congestion became too great. The wilderness, despite its dangers, acted as an outlet of escape from governmental activities and religious restrictions the Puritans would not and did not tolerate at home.68

The English settling of New England was a colonial rather than a capitalistic venture. Like the Dutch, early plans for both Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay called for the colonies to pursue the economic advantages fisheries and the fur trade afforded. However, the main English thrust would be in settlement. They arrived in New England with well-thought out ideas on how future growth should be planned.69 While Indians inhabited some of the land, the English considered much of New England vacant. The colonists had a natural right to the use of this land that God had provided for his people. It was considered unlawful for Christians to take the lands Indians already occupied simply because they were heathens, "for they are villains not to us; but to the Lord their God." By converting them to Christianity, however,
it was thought the Indians would voluntarily give themselves and their lands to the Europeans. Conversion then became an important part in realizing God's plan for New England.\textsuperscript{70}

These prior conceptions of the Indian, Christianity, and Indian land changed once the English arrived in the New World. The wilds of New England and the Indians themselves worked to displace priorities and force revisions in the Puritans' plans. Appalled by what they saw as devil-worshipping in Indian religious customs, the Puritan perception of the Indian took on the black portrait which earlier Spanish accounts and their own intellectual traditions painted of primitive man. This resulted in a deep suspicion of the natives and a doubting of whether they could be converted after all.\textsuperscript{71}

A redefinition of Indian land rights occurred in the Puritan mind. The Indian's claim to his land had earlier been viewed as a natural right given to all men by God. However, because the Indian left some of this land vacant and did not use it, the English rationalized that they then had an equal right to take the land and use it as God had intended. The legal principle of \textit{vacuum domicilium} became the basis for English land claims in the New World. Under this concept, discovery and occupancy of New World land conferred a title and political jurisdiction upon the nation's monarche, who in turn would pass on jurisdiction to settle-
ment agents. Thus the English charters issued to the Puritans gave them a legal right to the land. The ambiguities between the English and Indian definition of vacant, however, led to the later use of another legal concept for obtaining the land, *occupatio bellica*. This medieval Christian doctrine of conquest, when used, completely extinguished all previous Indian land titles and rights under European law. Originally applied only in wartime, the Puritans also used it in peace. While never explicitly stated, it was used in the annexation of Pequot lands and the taking of Indian slaves for distribution by the Puritan authorities. Later, English encroachment on non-hostile Indian lands in New England makes its use obvious.72

Such doctrines remained unstated in Puritan law. The colonies insisted that members had to be granted prior permission before land could be "bought." Payment must be made to some Indians who resided there before the land could be settled by the new owner. Defenders of Puritan Indian policy point this out to defend their position that the Indian was fairly treated.73 Nevertheless, the many instances of natives being arrested or forced to leave newly purchased lands illustrated that Indians did not understand the difference between the usufruct system and private property. Not even the long list of Indian names that usually are listed on an Indian land deed can justify the
document's legality. It only testifies to the fact that the Puritans misunderstood the Indian system and sought justification for seizing the land, by signing up as many occupants of the land as they could find. 74

Massachusetts Bay began to experience stress in its community only a few years after its founding. Unlike Plymouth, which was poorly situated, the Bay attracted many more immigrants. The explosive force of Puritanism combined a deep sense of mission in the New World with the prospects of economic and political freedoms. The lure brought a mounting population and governmental and religious crises by the mid 1630s. In 1634 Governor John Winthrop was voted out of office by disgruntled freemen who despised Winthrop's almost monolithic authority over the colony's affairs. By the time Winthrop regained his office, the colony had gone through three governors, the trial and banishment of Roger Williams, the Antinomian Crisis, the trial and deportation of Anne Hutchinson for her role in it, the migrating of entire congregations to areas beyond the limits of the original charter, and the beginnings of war in Connecticut. The rest of this study will document the latter.


4 The line of demarcation set by the Pope was renegotiate in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) which consented to pushing the line a full 1,175 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands. This enabled Portugal to claim both Brazil and Newfoundland. S. E. Morison, The European Discovery of America: The Southern Voyages 1492-1616 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 98. See also Miguel Batilori, S. J., "The Papal Division of the World and its Consequences," in First Images of America, Chappelli, ed., pp. 211-220.


8 Thomas J. Condon, New York Beginnings: The Commercial

Edmund B. O'Callaghan, History of New Netherland; New York Under the Dutch, 2 vol., (New York: Appleton & Company, 1845), I: chapters 1, 2; E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 15 vols., (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co. Printers, 1856-1887):1:51, 275; This was his third voyage to the New World. A mercenary at heart, Hudson returned to the British in 1610. On his next voyage, his harsh treatment of the crew led it to mutiny. Hudson was cast adrift by them in the Bay that now bears his name in Canada. The journal of his third voyage is lost, but some was said to be incorporated in Johan De Laet, "The New World," reprinted in part in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Narratives of New Netherland 1609-1664 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909):31-60. The best account of his third voyage may be Henry C. Murphy, Henry Hudson in Holland (Amsterdam, 1859:reprinted: New York: Burt Franklin, 1972). See also, G. M. Asher, ed., Henry Hudson the Navigator (London: Hakluyt Society, 1860).


O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 1:4-6; Specific universal dating is a problem during the period this paper concerns itself with. On February 24, 1582, Pope Gregory decreed the use of the new Gregorian calendar to replace the old Julian style. In the old style, the new year started on March 25 with the Feast of Our Lady, the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. The new decree which took effect on October 4, 1582 made the next day October 15 to set the calendar right. Holland and Zeeland adopted the new calendar, as did most of Europe over a period of a short time. Only England held out till an act of Parliament in 1752 decreed the change. W. Keith Kavenaugh, ed., Foundations of Colonial America; A Documentary History, 3 vols., (New York: Chelsea House, 1973):1:xi-xii.
I will follow the English practice of split years (1636/37 on important dates.

12Simon Hart, The Prehistory of the New Netherland Company (Amsterdam: City of Amsterdam Press, 1959), pp. 74-75; O'Callaghan, History of New Netherland, I:70-71. The flotilla was later joined by a Hoorn boat, either in Holland or at the Hudson. Ibid, p. 72; Bachman, Peltries or Plantations, pp. 5-7. Hart states Block and Corstiaensen were already in the New World by early March, 1614. The Prehistory of the New Netherland Company, appendix 9.


14The Onrust was said to be a yacht of eight lasts, a last being a standardized Amsterdam carrying weight in which one last equaled 1,976 kgs. Frederick C. Lane, "Tonnages, Medieval and Modern," Economic History Review 2nd ser. 17 (December 1964), p. 224. O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York: I:11-15; O'Callaghan, History of New Netherland, I:77-78. The map alleged to be drawn from the information gathered during this voyage of the New England coast is in Ibid, frontpiece.

15O'Callaghan, History of New Netherland, I:72-73; De Laet, in Narratives, Jameson, ed., p. 43. Exactly who these people were and how to identify them has come under some controversy. The practice of establishing distinct Indian tribes and territories from early accounts has been attacked by modern researchers as having little evidence to support the claims made. See Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island," p. 173. The Sequins had earlier been identified as the Wangunk sachemdom of the Mattabesec tribe by James Mooney in F. W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of Indian Tribes North of Mexico, 2 vols., (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1910, 1912): 1:821. DeForest believed them to be a distinct tribe under a sachem Sowheag who lived near present Wethersfield. The only author who identifies the Nawaas is Mathias Spiess, Indians of Connecticut. Tercentary Commission of the State
of Connecticut. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 1. He believes them to be either the Podunk, or the Tunxis. Both inhabited the Farmington River. If it was the Podunk as it appears to be, the village was Nowashe, located near present South Windsor.

16 The name "Frissius" is usually translated "Fresh" or "Little Fresh River" in the accounts to distinguish it from the "Versche," the Connecticut. Jameson in his editing of De Laet's account, Narratives, p. 43, identifies the river as the Four Mile. However, that river may be too shallow for a boat the size of the Onrust. Geographical knowledge, an understanding of Pequot history, and a careful reading of his own translation suggests Jameson is also wrong in assigning the "River of the Siccananos" as the Thames. During the summer of 1981, I made a trip retracing this segment of Block's voyage of the Connecticut shoreline aboard the 25-foot sailboat, Dawntreader, with its captain, Ed O'Connell. Ten different inlets and rivers were counted between the Connecticut and the Pawcatuck Rivers sizable enough for Block to notice and perhaps stop at. The logical solution would seem to be that the Frissius is the Thames and the Siccananos the Mystic, as they fit the description, and they are the largest rivers in the area. Jameson may have been mistaken in the latter identification because the Thames historically was called the Pequot due to the trading done there. Since that voyage, Salisbury in Manitou and Providence, p. 82 has also pointed out the possible error by Jameson in his translation. However, Salisbury does not point out the problem in assigning the Thames as the Frissius, Ibid, p. 263n. The Thames is a tidal river, and such is a salt water river. It is fed by a few fresh water rivers at and above Norwich, but at New London Harbour (Pequot) it remains salt water. Even above at Norwich Harbor, the water is only fresh when the tide goes out.

17 Block Island may have been first sighted by Verrazzano in 1524. See Wroth, The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano, pp. 86-87. Block Island became the first battleground of the Pequot War.

18 The only extent portions of Block's journal are believed to be contained in Johan DeLaet's. Niuwe Wereldt, Ofte Beschrijvinghe Van West-Indien, which originally appeared in 1624. DeLaet was a director in the West India Company who attempted to consolidate all known knowledge of the New World. He was given access to all of the journals of the Dutch navigators who went to the New World, including Hudson, Block, May, and others. The West India company
records which may have included this material are lost. The last report of them is that they were sold at auction by the government of Holland in 1821. George Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), p. 32n.

DeLaet's work went through four revisions and reprintings in the next few decades. Jameson used the 1630 edition. Because of the way DeLaet collected his material, over a number of years, it is possible he attributes material to Block's voyage that may not have been recorded by him. On these reprintings, see Bachman, Peltries or Plantations, p. 56; Murphy, Henry Hudson in Holland, pp. 98-100. The 1616 map reprinted in Phelps Stokes, The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1609, 6 vols., (New York: R. H. Dodd, 1915-1928):2:PL.23 has been attributed to Block. Actually the 1616 voyage of Cornelis Hendricksz is represented according to documents in O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, I:11-15. This map is an obvious corruption of the original or originals. The Nahicans (the Narragansett) are placed on Long Island, and the Wapanos (the Wampanoag) control Narragansett Bay. A village is located above the Thames River when it is even doubtful if Block sailed the Thames. It is possible that these copying mistakes resulted from the original being amended by later accounts using a compilation of knowledge available.

The different map that accompanies DeLaet's account is in Justin Windsor, ed., A Narrative and Critical History of America, 8 vols., (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1884-89):4:436. Many of its features do not agree with the 1616 map, and in fact the 1630 map seems more primitive. A useful list to compare the maps of this region drawn by the Dutch is in G. M. Asher, A Bibliographical and Historical Essay on the Dutch Books and Pamphlets Relating to the New Netherland and to the Dutch West India Company, 2nd Ed., (Amsterdam: N. Israel Publishing Department, 1960). Maps of the southern New England area are listed under 41 degrees, pp. 13-18. Sadly, none of the maps are reprinted and only a comparative list of placenames is given.

O'Callaghan, Documentary History of the State of New York, frontpiece vol. I, reprints a map O'Callaghan believes should be dated 1631. Yet it clearly shows Port Saybrook which was not built till 1635/36.

---


C. R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire (New York:

---


29 Nicholaes Van Wassenaer, "From the 'Historich Verhael' 1624-1630, Narratives, Jameson, ed., p. 86.

30 For Dutch trade in the area, see DeLaet, in Narratives, Jameson, ed., p. 43; Maloney, The Fur Trade in New England, pp. 41-46, 174. Wampum was made by stringing highly polished beads manufactured from sea shells. It was used as a medium of trade, and in early Massachusetts replaced the earliest currency used by the Puritans, ears of corn. The Indians of southeastern Connecticut, Rhode Island, and eastern Long Island manufactured the majority of wampum used in New England. Many of these areas were under Pequot hegemony. See, Frank Speck, "The Functions of Wampum Among the Eastern Algonkian," Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association 6 (January-March 1919):3-73. Charles A. Pilbower,
Indian land tenure and European perceptions of it may be the most controversial aspect of Indian-White relations throughout New World history. Many have cited land hunger as the root cause of animosity toward the Indian, see, Nash, Red, White, and Black, pp. 37-45; Trease, "Dutch Treatment of the Indian," p. 51; Jennings, The Invasion of America, pp. 81-84.


Hartford in 1638 forbade all survivors of the war from ever setting foot on their home soil, and made it illegal for Indians to refer to themselves as Pequot. It is reprinted in Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier, rev. ed., pp. 340-341.


41 Ibid, p. 331; Salwen, "In Situ", pp. 84-87; Snow, "Late

New England culture and society changed so quickly due to the effects of disease and cultural contact of the Europeans. The names of locations of the Indians can never be ascertained with clarity due to the closeness of the Algonquian dialects, and the Elizabethan-era custom of transcribing Indian words by spelling them as they sound to the writer. Many "tribes" identified might actually be different names for the same band or village of Indians. They may have been identified by the European using an Indian word for a place, or a person, and have no real political importance to them. Also, many Indian words were similar in sound, but had far different meanings. Thus "Mohigannewuk" may mean "wolves," but it could also be translated as "people of the mouth of the river where it opens out into a harbor." Speck, *Indian Tribes and Dialects*, pp. 219-221. Thus the people mentioned on the 1616 map could be any number of groups in eastern Connecticut. Uncas was an interesting personality. Immortalized by James Fenimore Cooper's use of his name in *The Last of the Mohicans*, many monuments exist of the wily sachem, including one in Norwich, Connecticut, whose cornerstone was laid by President Andrew Jackson in 1833. Alexander F. Chamberlain, "Uncas," in *Handbook*, Hodge, ed., 2:868.


James Mooney placed the pre-contact population of the Pequot Indians at 2,200 and the Mohegan at 600 "Aboriginal Population of America," p. 230. Francis Jennings, The Invasion of America, pp. 15-30 has attacked Mooney for trying to prove that a virgin land existed before European arrival with his population figures. Douglas Ubelaker, in The Native Population of the Americas, ed., p. 242 also attacks Mooney for not using Gookin's figures on the Pequot. A pre-contact figure of 13,300 is given by Dean Snow in The Archaeology of New England, p. 39, for the combined Pequot-Mohegan and by 1637 he reduces the figure to 3,000 due to disease. This is the figure supplied by Sherburne F. Cook in The Indian Population of New England in the Seventeenth Century, University of California Publications in Anthropology 12 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 51-52. All these figures do not count the Western Niantic who by this time was assimilated into the Pequot group. James Mooney, "Niantic," in Handbook, ed., 2:69. Neal Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, p. 210, claims the Pequot lost most of its strength in 1634 after the death of Tatobem. His assertion is based on the premise that the Pequot at that time were composed of semi-autonomous bands, like the Mohegan, which chose to break away learning the Pequot proper with only the core group around the Mystic River, and the Western Niantic. However, no evidence is given that the Mohegan actually were a separate entity till 1636-1637. Speck writes that the Mohegans originated after Uncas fled for the third time and was joined by "renegades and criminals from other tribes." Frank Speck and J. Dyneley Prince, "The Modern Pequots and Their Language," American Anthropologist Ns 5 (April-June 1903); p. 194; see DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut, p. 85 that many of his followers were River Indians. Testimony given in 1663 shows few Indians followed Uncas in the beginning. Francis Manwaring Caulkins, History of Norwich Connecticut (Hartford: Thomas Robinson, 1845), p. 22.


48 Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, p. 41. Other examples of this include Robert Cushman, "Discourse," in Alexander Young, ed., Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth 1602-1625 (Boston: Charles Little and James Brown, 1841), pp. 258-259; Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, pp. 121, 133-134. Morton, New English Canaan, p. 120.


The Dutch claim is given in "Deductions Respecting the Differences in Boundaries &c in New Netherland: Presented to the States General 5th of November 1660," in O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 2:139.


It has been argued the vices the Puritans saw in the Indians were merely reflections of those they saw in them-


CHAPTER III
TO THE MISTICK FORT

Sometime in early January 1933/34 news arrived in Boston from Plymouth that Captain John Stone and his crew had been attacked and killed by Indians at the "mouth of Connecticut... where the Pequins inhabit." Massachusetts Bay Governor John Winthrop and his council "agreed to write to the Governor of Virginia, (because Stone was one of that colony,) to move him to revenge it, and upon his answer to take further counsel."¹ Stone had been a troublemaker and a thorn in the side of both Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth, and his death caused few tears of regret in the governing bodies of those colonies.² Yet his death is inextricably linked to the reasons why three years later Puritan authorities in New England set out to literally exterminate the Pequot Indians from the face of the earth. To understand this, it is necessary to recount certain events, starting in 1631, which center on the Connecticut River.

In April 1631 the barely year old colony of Massachusetts Bay was visited by "Waghinacut, a sagamore from the river Quonehtacut," a place that "is not above five days journey from us by land." Waghinacut identified himself as a sachem of the Sequin Indians, and he offered the magistrates the opportunity to set up a trading post in his country bordering the Connecticut River. He not only gave an inviting description of the natural bounty of the land, but also promised 80
beaver skins annually in tribute. However, the Bay authorities at this time feared a too rapid expansion from their coastal enclave. They refused the offer. They later discovered the reason behind Waghinacut's mission, that "the said sagamore is a very treacherous man, and at war with the Pekoath (a far greater sagamore.) This episode marks the first native attempt to use the English as a force to counter the existing political-economic situation in Native American Connecticut. The River Indians wanted an ally to help them against the dominant, Dutch-backed Pequots. Turned down by Massachusetts, Waghinacut went straight to the Plymouth colony where his proposal met a similar fate.³

Plymouth had earlier turned down a Dutch proposal to set up a small operation on the Connecticut. Yet despite turning down Waghinacut, the Pilgrim authorities saw the economic possibilities of such a move into the region. Edward Winslow journeyed to the Connecticut in 1632 and returned with a glowing report. Perhaps fearing the Dutch and Indians, despite their invitations to come to Connecticut, Plymouth proposed to Massachusetts Bay in 1633 that a joint venture be taken to establish an English presence on the river. Massachusetts Bay declined the offer, and Plymouth decided to go it alone. Governor Winthrop wrote in his journal, at this time concerning the Massachusetts' decision to refuse the proposal that "there was a notion to set up a trading house
there, to prevent the Dutch, who were about to build one; but, in regard, the place was not fit for plantation, there being three or four thousand warlike Indians and the river not to be gone into but by small pinnaces...we thought not to meddle with it."

Winthrop's journal entry may air the legitimate feeling at the time that the Connecticut River trade could not be tapped successfully at the mouth of the river. The refusal to join Plymouth masks the fact that the Bay by 1633 had a real interest in the economic opportunities present in the Connecticut River Valley. They commissioned John Oldham that year to make several overland journeys to the area. It may be that the Bay hoped to tap the Connecticut River trade by reaching the headwaters of the Merrimac River and from there diverting the trade overland to Boston. If this plan proved successful, the Bay colony could reap the harvest of furs without sharing the bounty with either Plymouth or the Dutch.

A Bay expedition was present on the river at the time of Stone's death. They found the trading poor due to a smallpox epidemic brought to the area earlier by Dutch traders. The Bay expedition reported that the disease had spread "as far as any Indian plantation was known to the west, and much people dead of it, by reason whereof they could have no trade. At Narragansett, by the Indians' report, there died seven hundred; but beyond Pascataquaick, none to the eastward."
This expedition and its report are important in considering the events that followed. It establishes a definite interest in the area by the Bay Puritans at the time of Stone's death. It also suggests that disease may have been changing the demographic, and thus political, balance in native southern New England. It should be noted that the boundaries given, if correctly reported by the expedition, correspond geographically with the territory of the Pequot Indians and their allies.

The original European claimants to the area, the Dutch, had been slow to establish a post on the Connecticut. This may be testimony to the fact that Dutch trade system in southern New England, with the Pequot as middlemen, worked smoothly enough that no physical presence was needed. Waghinacut's visits to the English colonies may have spurred them to change this. To secure their claim under international law, the Dutch decided to formally occupy the river to keep the English out. The West India Company granted permission to its Manhattan factors to build a post on the Connecticut and secure the monopoly of trade there. In 1632 at a spot called Kievet's Hook (After the cry of a bird that lived there) near the mouth of the Connecticut, Hans Eenckuys planted the arms of the States General of the Netherlands and declared the river the property of the West India Company. After this symbolic gesture, Eenckuys sailed away without constructing a fort there to substantiate the Dutch claim.
This did not occur till the next year. In the late spring of 1633, the company sent Jacob van Curler with a party of men to purchase a pre-selected site on the west bank of the Connecticut River in order to build a fortified post there. A deed was signed on June 18th with "Wapyquart or Tateopan," grand sachem of the Pequot Indians for a small tract of land called Sickajook. It measured approximately one league in length along the river and extended one-third of a league into the country. In exchange for their signing the agreement, the Indians received twenty-seven ells of a coarse cloth called duffals, six axes, six kettles, eighteen knives, one sword blade, a pair of shears, and some toys. A fort called House of Good Hope was constructed on the site with two small cannon mounted at its entrance. The Dutch now felt they owned the legal right to all the Connecticut River trade.

The deed signed resembled more an economic treaty than a transference of land. It arranged for a truce between the Pequots and the "Sequins," a local Indian group that Waghina-cut may have represented in 1631. The Indians could continue to use the land as before, perhaps a Dutch recognition of the usufract system used by the natives. The key provisions of the agreement concerned itself with free trade at the post. This hints that the volume of pelts in the Connecticut fur trade had already begun to wane even at this early date due
to the killing off of the area's never bountiful supply of animals. The Dutch may not have realized this but instead blamed the decline on the old trading system in which the Pequot held the middleman position between the Indians who collected the furs and the Dutch who payed the Pequot for them. Under the agreement all tribes would be allowed to trade at the Dutch post. It allowed the Dutch to attract the greatest number of trading partners possible. It also subordinated the Pequot to a secondary position than before. The Dutch hoped that by having the Pequots agree to guarantee the rights of other groups to trade at the post they could stop any inter-group rivalries that might lead to conflict. Despite this agreement and their cannon, the Dutch soon learned that the imposition of European concepts of free trade and territorial neutrality could not be easily transferred to native New England.11

An incident occurred near the post shortly after its construction that involved a skirmish between some Pequots and some unidentified Indians, possibly Narragansetts. The Dutch had underestimated the individual Indian's willingness to abide to conditions which went against tradition and custom. It is highly unlikely that Wopigooit had any foreknowledge of the incident or that he was even in the area at the time. Nevertheless, the Dutch decided to make an example of him, possibly to show other Indians that the Dutch
expected them to live up to their obligations. It is also possible that the Dutch feared that Wopigooit, resenting the position his tribe now found themselves in, may break the agreement in the near future. They sent a ship to Pequot, lured the sachem aboard it, and then murdered him. If this act was designed to cow the tribe into obedience, the exact opposite occurred. The act insured war and the disruption of trade. The murder of Wopigooit began a succession crisis within the tribe between Sassacus, his son, and Uncas. It forced the tribe "in an evil hour for both themselves and the Dutch,"\textsuperscript{12} to seek help from the only other European power it could turn to for trade and help, the English. The murder also began a succession crisis within the tribe between Sassacus and Uncas which ultimately played an important factor in the tribe's later defeat.\textsuperscript{13}

Dutch troubles on the Connecticut continued with the arrival of a Plymouth expedition to the river in September 1633. William Holmes and his expedition sailed past the guns of the Dutch fort and established a post north of the Dutch, about present Windsor, Connecticut. In spite of their earlier invitation to Plymouth to join them on the river, the Dutch sent a force to the new post demanding that the English leave. The Plymouth men refused to budge. They claimed that they had a legal right to occupy the spot having bought it from the rightful Indian owners. They produced several Indians
they had brought with them from Plymouth to prove this. The Dutch remained unconvinced, yet they dare not risk war with Plymouth at this time. They did not want a possible English-Pequot alliance against them. The superior-numbered Dutch force marched away. Plymouth now had its post on the Connecticut.¹⁴

The establishing of a Plymouth post on the river may help to explain why the Pequots decided to approach Massachusetts Bay rather than them for a possible alliance. No Bay post yet existed in the area. The expeditions sent to the region demonstrated their interest, and the possibility of an alliance may have been addressed during discussions with John Oldham as he traded with the tribe. Certainly the killing of Stone and his men had little to do with the reasons why the Pequot sought this alliance with the Bay. There can be no doubt that the sending of the first Pequot messenger to Massachusetts was a calculated move by the tribe designed to ultimately form an entente that would insure their position in the face of economic and political losses due to disease and the Dutch war.

The messenger arrived in the Bay in October of 1634. He carried with him two bundles of sticks symbolizing the number of skins the Indians would be willing to give in tribute if an agreement could be reached. The magistrates he met did not know what to make of this initial contact. They sent the
courier back with a small gift and the message that the tribe must send "persons of greater quality and then our governor would treat with them." The Bay government wanted representatives empowered by the tribe to conclude an agreement on the spot. They did not realize that this request was impossible under Indian protocol. They failed to understand that the upcoming meeting represented only nonbinding discussions on the possible makeup of a treaty of alliance and nothing more.

In November two Pequots arrived with gifts of wampum. They met with the governing council in Boston who expressed an interest in friendship with the tribe. They first demanded, however, that the Indians turn over the killers of Stone and his men to them. The Pequots answered that all but two of those responsible for the killings had themselves been killed by disease or the Dutch. Probably surprised by the magistrates insistence on the issue, the two stated that if the two survivors are judged worthy of death by the tribe that they would ask their sachem to have them delivered to the Bay for punishment. They then gave account of the killings. Apparently Stone had sailed to the mouth of the Connecticut River and while trading there kidnapped two Indians to act as guides for a trip upriver. Other Indians present followed his ship hoping to rescue the two. Stone made the fatal error of stopping for the night and going ashore with some of his
men to sleep. The pursuing Indians caught up to them and killed them while they slept. The Indians then attempted to board the ship only to have it suddenly blow up. (The alarm had been given and it is possible that a careless seaman had touched off the powder magazine.) The Indians related this story to their audience with such gravity that those present in the room tended to believe it.  

The next day the Indians met with Governor Thomas Dudley. The Pequots explained to him their position. The tribe wanted trade with the Bay colony. This was because they were presently at war with the Dutch and the Narragansett Indians, the tribe that had taken over the Pequots' old dominant position in the revamped Dutch trading system. This alliance made it no longer safe for members of the Pequot tribe to trade anywhere. In exchange for the Massachusetts Bay colony's economic and political friendship, the Pequots pledged to give exclusive trading rights to the Puritans, plus the use of land on the Connecticut River to set up a trading post there.  

It is critical to understand what followed after the Pequot emissaries made their offer. The Puritans assumed that these men had been invested with authority by their tribal leaders to conclude an agreement on the spot. In reality, they had no such power. Native custom demanded that a consensus decision be reached at the tribal council on matters of such grave importance. The mission of the two
Pequots was merely to receive the Bay's terms on the matter. The Puritan response to these overtures showed them to be hard bargainers. Their demands included turning over to them the killers of Captain Stone and his men, a promise to "yield up Connecticut" (what this meant is not certain, perhaps only territory along the river,) a tribute of 400 fathoms of wampum, 40 beaverskins, and 30 otter pelts. In return for this, the Bay would send a ship to trade with the tribe at Pequot. But they refused to enter a formal military alliance with the tribe. To conclude the talks, the Puritans put their terms on paper and both parties signed it.17

This "agreement" no longer exists. Even if it did, its importance can only be considered symbolic of the vast gulf that separated the two parties' conceptions of one another. The Puritans felt they now had a binding agreement and a just and legal right to be on the Connecticut, for a signed statement was the bedrock of legitimacy under European law. To the Native Americans, it meant little. The Indians probably signed it only to please their hosts and probably had no idea the importance the Puritans placed on it. According to their protocol, nothing could be concluded until the tribal council met. So, as both parties left the meeting, neither side understood what the other thought had occurred there. Cultural differences led to a grave misunderstanding that perhaps more than any other single event bred suspicion and
hostility into the hearts of the respective antagonists.

The following day a rumor circulated that a party of 200-300 Narragansett warriors had been sighted headed for Boston. The story claimed that their sachems had heard of the negotiations and wished to stop them by killing the Pequot emissaries. The rumor proved false much to the relief of the magistrates. They did however contact some of the Narragansett sachems and ultimately arranged a truce between the two tribes. The Pequots had asked Massachusetts to intercede for them on this matter. The Pequots supplied the necessary tribute gift, but had the Puritans give it to the Narragansetts. The Pequots saw it as dishonorable to offer it directly to a tribe it felt was inferior to itself.\(^{18}\) With the truce in effect, the emissaries left to report back to the Pequot council, and Massachusetts Bay believed it now had a legal right to the Connecticut. Ironically, the agreement came under attack by some in the colony for its swift execution "without consent of the people and for other failings."\(^{19}\) This accusation would have voided it under Pequot custom.

The agreement came at a good time for the Bay magistrates. Earlier that summer the Bay began to feel the pressures of overpopulation within the colony. A general court held at Newtown in August 1634 had to face the first threat of colonists wishing to leave the theocracy by the bay for the wilderness of Connecticut. The agitators were recent
immigrants to Newtown who claimed that the area set aside for them by the colony was too small for the group to grow economically and spiritually. They also gave as reasons for the move "the fruitfulness and commodiousness of Connecticut and the danger of it being possessed by others, Dutch or English." The court magistrates managed this time to persuade the group not to go at this time. The long list of reasons why the move should not be made included the assertions that the colony as a whole would be placed in jeopardy if its members left it now and the argument that no legal right existed in the Massachusetts Bay charter for such a move into an area that the charter may not cover.  

The lack of a legal right to be on the Connecticut had not detered the Bay from sending out expeditions to it in the past as has been seen. Even while the settlers agitated for migration and the colony entertained the Pequot overtures, John Oldham continued to be active on the river. He and a group of men, "the ten adventurers," established a trading post at Pyquag that year. The Pequot agreement opened the way for major settlement. In May 1635 Oldham brought 35 families from the town of Watertown to the area of Pyquag and founded the town of Wethersfield. That summer a group of Dorchester men settled near the Plymouth fort on the west bank of the Connecticut and later established the town of Windsor. In the fall, a group from Newtown settled north
of the Plymouth fort. They were joined by their pastor Thomas Hooker and the rest of his congregation in May 1636. Together they established Hartford.²³

The issue of English expansion and jurisdiction over the new settlements in Connecticut became further complicated with the arrival in November 1635 of John Winthrop, Jr. in Boston. Winthrop, Jr., carried authorization under the Warwick patent to construct a fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River. Under his orders, men landed at the mouth of the river, tore down the arms of the Estates General posted there by Eenckuy in 1632 (carving a fool's head in its place), purchased land from the neighboring Indians, and constructed the post. Once established, Winthrop, Jr., claimed authority over the entire Connecticut River Valley as an agent of the Warwick Patentees.²⁴

The next spring the Massachusetts General Court met faced with the dilemma of deciding whether the towns founded by its members actually had a legal right to exist under the old charter, with their agreement with the Pequots, and in light of the claims of the Warwick patentees. The court worked out a compromise in which Winthrop, Jr., would recognize the existence of the towns as long as they recognize the Warwick patent and Winthrop, Jr.'s governorship. The Bay appointed a commission to see to it that each side's rights would be respected.²⁵
The Bay's relations with the Pequots soon soured. As might be expected, the tribe did not agree with the English conditions. The ship sent to Pequot Harbor met with little success, primarily because it arrived with goods that did not interest the Indians. Some trade between the two ultimately did take place as one Englishman refers to the Pequots as being "just and equal in their dealings; not treacherous either to their countrymen, or the English." Yet when neither the killers of Stone and his men nor the expected tribute appeared forthcoming, Massachusetts officials felt betrayed. The fact that a "treaty" existed between the two may be the key to the Bay's apprehensions. The expanding Bay colony wanted to insure its claim to the Connecticut River by making certain that the document's provisions allowed them. The decision was made to impress on the Pequots the necessity of abiding by the agreement.

In the late spring of 1636, Massachusetts Bay sent word to the Pequots requesting a meeting, and ordered John Winthrop, Jr., who also held a post in the Bay government, to represent them. Winthrop, Jr. may have had his own reasons for wanting to talk to the Indians. Recently a letter (dated June 18, 1636) had been sent to him by Jonathan Brewster, chief factor of the Plymouth post on the Connecticut. In it Brewster relayed a report received by his men from Uncas that the Pequots would soon attack all the Englishmen on the river.
Brewster put the onus for this development on the recently arrived Bay people to the area. He wrote that "the indiscreet speeches of some of your people here to the natives," have led the Pequots to understand "that the English will shortly come against them," and the Pequots "out of desperate madnesse doe threaten to sett upon Indians and English joyntly."^27

Winthrop, Jr., with John Oldham attending, met later that month near Fort Saybrook with the local Western Niantic sachem, Sassious. The Western Niantic had by this time been all but assimilated into the Pequot and Sassious may have been the ranking sachem in the area. During this meeting, Winthrop, Jr. demanded that the Pequots abide by the treaty provisions. They wanted those responsible for killing the Englishmen, more trade, and the tribute. It is ironic that, though the English did not know it, that those responsible for the killings belonged to Sassious' own band of Western Niantic. Sassious may have been doubly surprised over both the concern for an event that had occurred over two years earlier and seemed justified in his eyes and the mention of an official agreement. The Pequot had not opposed the founding of the new towns on the river simply because it was in their best interests at that time not to. The English countered the Dutch presence and allowed the Pequots needed trade once shut off to them. From what can be obtained about this meeting, it seems it did not produce any tangible results.
Sassious could only relay the English grievances to the Pequot council. However, it has been suggested that Winthrop, Jr. may have left the meeting feeling that Sassious, for reasons that remain unknown, had decided to give his entire territory and his people to the protection and personal jurisdiction of Winthrop, Jr. "In a move worthy of a Tallyrand," writes Francis Jennings, Sassious left the Pequot camp to join up with the English. If Winthrop, Jr. did suffer from this chimera, he must have been disillusioned later to find his wards harassing and killing Englishmen around Fort Saybrook. It may be another case of cultural misunderstanding in which the Indian custom of giving a tribute payment to a European to intercede with others for him may have been misconstrued.29

Misunderstanding and suspicion turned to war with the killing of John Oldham. The events surrounding his death and the Bay's subsequent decision to launch a punitive expedition against the Pequots remain vague and confused. The ill-advised and bumbled operations at Pequot Harbor resulted. Its aftermath clearly shows the lack of understanding on both sides about who was responsible for initiating the hostilities or even why they should occur in the first place.

Oldham sailed for Narragnasett Bay shortly after the conclusion of the Fort Saybrook parley. His crew consisted of two English boys (perhaps his sons though this is not
known for certain) and two Narragansett Indians. While trading somewhere in the waters between Block Island and Narragansett Bay, Indians boarded Oldham's ship and killed him. The crew was taken prisoner and brought ashore at Narragansett. Exactly where this occurred cannot be said with certainty. Apparently while the Indians plundered the trade goods on board, the ship broke its moorings and drifted. It was sighted off Block Island by another trader, John Gallop. Recognizing her as Oldham's and suspicious of seeing her drifting with so many Indians on board, Gallop decided to investigate. Several Indians panicked at spying Gallop's approach and jumped overboard into the sea. One Indian did manage to set sail, but Gallop gave chase and quickly overtook the pirated vessel. Gallop secured alongside and boarded the ship, disposing of the Indians on deck save one who he captured alive. Two more Indians had managed to barricade themselves below deck. Gallop hoped to tow the vessel to Saybrook. Contrary winds defeated this plan. So throwing his bound prisoner overboard to drown, Gallop let Oldham's vessel slip her ties, and the wind blew it toward Narragansett Bay where it grounded ashore. Word later came to Boston that the Narragansetts had captured those responsible for the attack. They further claimed that an expedition of 200 warriors had been sent to punish the Block Islanders for complicity in the act itself.
The Narragansetts agreed to send one of those captured in the vessel to Boston accompanied by one of Oldham's Indian crewmen. While under examination there by the Puritans, the accused Indian claimed that Oldham's own Narragansett crewmen took part in the plan to kill him as part of a wider conspiracy that included all but the two highest sachems in the Narragansett tribe. Why they wanted him dead is not known but it could have been his close association with the Narragansetts' longtime trade rivals, the Pequots, or perhaps a trade dispute over transactions between Oldham and the tribe. Despite hearing this surprising testimony, the Bay authorities released both Indians. No demand came for the killers of Oldham to the tribe, unlike the case concerning Stone and the Pequots. Instead the Bay requested that the Indians return the two English boys taken in the piracy and the trade cargo pillaged from Oldham's ship. The tribe complied and sent both boys and goods, along with a letter stating that those responsible had been members of the Eastern Niantic, a close ally of the Narragansetts.\(^{31}\)

The Bay did not forget Oldham's death. This may have been because, despite his reputation as a troublemaker, he had been useful to the colony. Not a month passed before the Bay authorities decided to avenge his death. But instead of attacking the Narragansetts or their ally, the Eastern Niantic, they chose to make their revenge on the more vulnerable
Block Islanders, the Indians the Narragansetts originally blamed for the killings. The reasoning behind this decision is unclear. It could be that they believed that some of the Eastern Niantics responsible for the killings actually resided there. (The Eastern Niantic occupied the coastal strip between Narragansett Bay to the east and the Pequot territory to the west.) More than likely the real reasons behind the decision centered on the belief that no more killings of Englishmen could go on unpunished, no matter who was responsible. The example would be made of the Block Islanders rather than risk a war with the powerful Narragansetts who might come to the aid of the Eastern Niantic should they be attacked. The retribution on the Block Islanders would be in Old Testament terms: all the men would be put to death, all the women and children sold into slavery. 32

The expedition had two phases to it. First would be the attack on Block Island. Then, to make a clean sweep of the slate, the militia would proceed to Pequot. There the killers of Stone and his men would be given up by the tribe, along with a tribute payment of 1,000 fathoms of wampum. To insure Pequot obedience to the Bay's wishes in the future, the tribe would be instructed to give up some of its children as hostages. (This idea in a culture where love for one's children is nearly fanatical probably irked the Pequots the most.) If the Pequots refused to comply to these demands
voluntarily, the expedition would take them by force.\textsuperscript{33}

This phase seems almost to be an afterthought to the Block Island operation. It had been rumored earlier that some of the guilty Block Islanders had fled to the Pequot. It is possible that some Block Islanders may have fled to the Pequot later for protection as the Pequot did claim tribute from the island till only a short time before. Yet there is no mention of the demand for them in the Puritan ultimatum to the tribe. In no way can the Pequot be considered complicit in the death of Oldham as it seems that they enjoyed good relations with one another.\textsuperscript{34}

John Endicott and an army of 80 men arrived on Block Island on August 30, 1636. After a difficult landing due to the wind, Endicott's men fought a short skirmish on the beach with a few Indians who quickly retreated into the woods. Rather than follow them, he camped for the night on the cold, wind-swept beach. The next day he ventured inland to find the main Indian villages deserted. His men burned cornfields, destroyed grass mats used for sleeping, and punctured canoes. A few dogs fell victim to his men's muskets. Before departing, he did stumble on another group of Indians and a short skirmish resulted.\textsuperscript{35}

The expedition then sailed to Saybrook with its primary mission on Block Island far from realized. They received a less than cordial welcome from the commander of the post,
Lt. Lion Gardener. When Endicott disclosed his plans for sailing to Pequot and his mission there, Gardener protested but to no avail. He reluctantly agreed to accompany the Bay militia mainly to take in food supplies for what appeared to him to be the coming war. He realized he would have to bear the brunt of it at Saybrook.36

Things did not go better for Endicott at Pequot. Representatives of the tribe stalled him on the beach for most of the day while, rightfully so, the tribe tried to gather together Sassacus and the council so that the Puritan demands may be addressed. While on the beach, a Pequot emissary tried to explain to the English again the story behind the killing of Stone and his crew. The event had occurred only a few months after the Dutch had lured aboard ship and murdered the old Pequot sachem Wopogooit and the commencement of war between the tribe and the Dutch. Stone's hostile actions led the Indians to believe that Stone was also a Dutchman, "for we distinguish not between the Dutch and English, but took them to be one nation, and therefore we do not conceive that we wronged you, for they slew our king." When told that the Indians have had sufficient experience to distinguish between the two, the Pequot replied "we know no difference between the Dutch and the English; they are both strangers to us, we took them to be all one."37

This answer hints at the real situation. The Indians
had still not learned enough about the English to readily identify their actions and motives, except by the most superficial means, from those of the Dutch. The English entry into this area had been so late that it is entirely possible and probable that at the time of the killing of Stone and men that the Indians could not readily identify the political or social differences between the two Europeans. The overwhelming material and physiological differences between the natives and the European trader, between the Old World and the New, blotted out such seemingly minor differences as nationality. This had obviously changed for the Pequots by the October 1634 mission to Boston at least politically. However, it appears that the Indians at this time still failed to comprehend the basic differences in motivation and action that separated the English and Dutch policies in such key areas as trade, land, tribute, and war. They assumed the English would act as the Dutch had in the past. This old role model blinded them to the English menace that was to soon swallow their still native-dominated world.

The English understanding of the natives continued to be poor. They persisted in viewing Indian society through a European framework which only badly distorted their image of native America. The Pequots were seen as cruel murderers rather than honorable avengers, as liars and treacherous treaty-breakers rather than interested negotiators. The
failure to perceive the Indian in his own environment gave a truth in their minds of words such as primitive, barbaric, savage, and bloodthirsty to describe the Indian. This in turn reinforced their traditional prejudice against non-Christian and non-European societies. This enabled the forgetting of the Indian's humanity in the wake of English material opportunity and expansion to be much easier accomplished.

By dusk, Endicott lost his patience and ordered his troops to attack the Pequots that had assembled on the beach. In the ensuing skirmish, one Indian was killed and one militiaman wounded. The Indians retreated into the woods, and Endicott faced a repeat of operations on Block Island. He burned one empty village that night. The next day he crossed the Thames and burned another, looted the cornfields, then sailed away. In his wake he left war. Ironically, not one Massachusetts soldier was left in Connecticut to fight it. 38

The Pequots now realized the full potential of their danger. The hoped for alliance had turned into a seemingly unprovoked attack on their home villages. With no European allies available, the Pequots turned to the Connecticut River Indian groups only to find many had already allied themselves with the English or Uncas. In desperation, an attempt was made to form an alliance with their old enemies, the
Narragansetts. The timely intervention of Roger Williams foiled these plans. Massachusetts Bay later that fall concluded a treaty of alliance with the Narragansetts against the Pequots.\textsuperscript{39}

The Connecticut River became the frontline of battle. Not differentiating between the Massachusetts Bay English and their Connecticut brethren, the Pequots harried Fort Saybrook and trade along the river. A score of English were killed, almost half in a raid on the town of Wethersfield. In that action, many of the Indians involved were not Pequot but local Indians displaced off their land by the settlers.\textsuperscript{40}

The attack on Wethersfield brought a united front by the river towns where none had existed before. Massachusetts proved of little help, sending 20 men to Fort Saybrook in the spring of 1637. However, they later sent 40 men to Block Island on the rumor that the Pequot had moved their women and children there for safety. Apparently slaving was more important to the Bay than the security of Connecticut.\textsuperscript{41} Plymouth hesitated to send any troops claiming the war did not concern them and citing past grievances against Massachusetts Bay.\textsuperscript{42} A force of 90 men under the command of Captain John Mason arrived in Saybrook from the Connecticut River towns in May 1637. A group of 50 river Indians and "Mohegans" under Uncas accompanied them.\textsuperscript{43}

After a conference, Mason received command of the combined English forces at Saybrook for an offensive against the Pequot
104

home territory. The English force would travel by water around the Pequot strongholds on the Mystic River and disembark at Narragansett Bay. Once there they would march overland and attack the two major Pequot camps from the east. The expedition left Saybrook on Friday, May 29, 1637.44

The plan worked well. The Pequots noticed the English sail past them and immediately began celebrating an imaginary victory. This may be because in the past the English had always attacked from the sea. They were so confident of their security that they failed to post any sentries about their fort against an overland assault. The militia and Indian force landed and immediately picked up further Narragansett and Niantic levies. On the morning of the sixth day after landing at Narragansett, the troops stood before the gates of a Pequot village.45

Unfortunately for Mason's plans, only one village could be attacked. The one chosen, called Mistick and under the sachem Mamoho, housed mainly women and children. The majority of the Pequot fighting men were away at Weinshauks, the main Pequot village. The initial English assault on Mistick penetrated deep into this palisaded village, but a brisk counterattack succeeded in pushing them back. It was then that the idea came to Mason to torch the village. The results proved devastating. The subsequent inferno and slaughter has burned itself into the American psyche. It remains a horrible symbol
of Indian-White relations to this day. Only a handful of those inside managed to run the gauntlet of fire, English, and Indian auxilliaries to safety. A few women and children were allowed to live to be sold into slavery.\textsuperscript{46}

Sassacus and his men arrived too late to help their families. The English and their allies had already bolted to the coast where ships awaited to take them away. Enraged and bereaved warriors followed and finally caught up with the main body of the English before the ships arrived. The Pequots ran headlong into the withering fire of muskets as grief-stricken husbands, fathers, and brothers threw themselves at the Puritans. The Pequots suffered high casualties and the attack was broken off. European technology and tactics won the day. When it was all over and the English returned to Saybrook, they counted two dead and twenty wounded. The Pequots lost at least 400 dead at Mistick alone, with another 100 warriors killed or wounded in the later attack. Those figures may be conservative. More important, their spirit had been shattered by the devastating defeat. A council convened shortly afterward and blamed Sassacus for the defeat, but allowed him to retain the sachem post. In the ashes of world now gone, the remaining Pequots decided that further fighting would be futile. They left their homeland and fled to the west for safety. The physical disintegration of the Pequot Indians had begun.\textsuperscript{47}
SUMMARY

The key to the events described in chapter three is cultural perception. The origins of the Pequot War has its roots in the context of the overall movement of Europeans with their Old World conceptions of society, culture, and humanity expanding into new areas of the world and coming into direct contact with native peoples who likewise possessed longstanding cultural and societal traditions. Chapter one in this paper illustrates that southern New England contained a native population with a complex cultural system that had definite ideas of group organization, leadership roles, and land holding practices. These notions came into direct conflict with those exported into the area by first the Dutch and then the English. Chapter two shows that Europeans came to the New World with preconceived ideas of the land and its resources, the inhabitants, and what they hoped to accomplish once they arrived there. Influences such as European intellectual traditions, travel literature, and economic dreams played important roles in the formation of the European view of the New World. Though alterations to this view and their plans had to be made upon arrival in response to New World realities, ideas formulated in the Old World still predominated in this early period in guiding their attitudes and actions. The natives did not share in these alien perceptions.
Two distinct world views of man and society clashed in the forests of early New England. It fed suspicion and hostility on both sides. The origins of the war lie in the hearts and minds of the antagonists. Neither side showed any real willingness to accommodate with the other. Distinctions over each culture's view of trade, land use, diplomacy, and political obligations never became real considerations to be thought out and discussed. The radically changing political environment of southern New England due to native depopulation by disease and the expansion of English settlements led both the English and Pequot to promote their immediate self interests at the expense of long-term problems remaining unresolved. Ethnocentricism and pride worked as detriments to solving these problems and proved to be catalysts that helped to lead to war. It is possible to argue that racism or human greed, on both sides, fed the war fever. Yet they are symptoms of the larger underlying sickness caused by cultural ignorance and misunderstanding. It is possible that had either or both sides sought to fully comprehend the position of the other in light of cultural differences, the war could have been avoided. Instead each side fought the war according to its own cultural and technological limitations and advantages. English superiority in tactics and weaponry made the outcome inevitable. The Pequot never understood in 1637 that despite the pride it had for itself and the self-
righteous it felt about a war the tribe never sought to fight, the English belief in themselves and their society made the Indian's perceptions of the world and their place in it an anachronism in a universe that had changed too fast for them to comprehend. This lesson would be remembered in the next major Indian war against the English in New England almost four decades later.

2 Stone had been banished from both Puritan colonies in Massachusetts. Among charges brought against him were piracy, adultery, and public drunkenness. He was heading back to Virginia when he decided to stop at the Connecticut. Winthrop's Journal, Hosmer, ed., 1:102, 110; Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, Morison, ed., pp. 268-270. Howard P. Beck, The American Indian as Seafighter (Mystic, CT: The Marine Historical Association, Inc., 1959), pp. 20-22 discusses what may have happened on board. For a Pequot version of the incident see John Underhill, "Noves from America." in The History of the Pequot War, Orr, ed., p. 46.


4 Ibid, pp. 258-259; Winthrop’s Journal, Hosmer, ed., 1:103; Maloney, The Fur Trade in New England, p. 47. The quote is the same used by DeForest in note 44, part II.


8 Dean Snow has estimated the pre-contact figure of the Pequot at 13,300 and that the tribe suffered a 77% mortality rate during the epidemic. Snow bases these figures on a format developed using the Abenaki of Maine, one of the better documented groups in New England. The Archaeology of New England, pp. 38-39.


10 Ibid, 2:139-140; O’Callaghan, History of New Netherland, 1:150-151.
11. Ibid.


13. It is interesting to note that DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut, p. 67, gives Sassacus name as Tatopan, the family name. However, it is unlikely he was he who signed the treaty. Uncas claimed the sachem post through matrilineal descent, being a nephew to the old sachem and having married a daughter of Sassacus. Following the Uncas genealogy, it does appear that descent was through patrilineal lines. It may be that in the early history of the tribe descent may have been matrilineal, which is considered by ethnologists to be more primitive. "Kinship," Handbook, Hodge, ed., 1:692. For the genealogy of Uncas, see DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut, p. 67; Carroll Alton Means, "Mohegan-Pequot Relationships as Indicated by the Events Leading to the Pequot Massacre of 1637 and Subsequent Claims in the Mohegan Land Controversy," in Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut 21 (December 1947), pp. 26-34. Means argues that Uncas actually married a daughter of the old sachem and this along with royalty in his bloodline made him a proper claimant to the sachem post. Ibid, pp. 30-33.


16. Ibid, 1:139; DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut, pp. 73, 78. DeForest suggests that the Pequot were declining as a power at this time due to losses suffered in the Dutch war. He notes that the tribe had recently lost its tribute power over Block Island to the Eastern Niantic and the Narragansett groups. Ibid. He fails to mention if epidemic disease played a role in this decline. Francis Jennings, The Invasion of America, p. 190, assumes that the only reason for the Pequot-Bay negotiations was to arrange a truce for the tribe with the Narragansett. His distrust of Winthrop may be reflected in this assessment as Winthrop writes of the truce almost as an afterthought to the main negotiations. Winthrop's Journal, Hosmer, ed., 1:140. Jennings reasoning here is, at best, superficial.
Jennings, The Invasion of America, p. 190, writes that the missing treaty is of great importance in proving that a conspiracy existed then and later to hide the Puritan's ruthless dealings with the Indians. No doubt he is correct in discerning the importance the Bay authorities placed on the "treaty" as subsequent events proved. However, the fact remains that Winthrop did not hesitate to list the treaty provisions in his journal so no attempt was made to cover up the negotiations and its results. Its disappearance reflects the faulty records preservation of the time and the document's lack of usefulness to the Puritan authorities after the defeat of the Pequot gave them what they wanted regardless. Jennings also makes a fundamental error in assuming that the Pequot considered the signing of a document during the negotiations in Boston more than just of minor importance to them. Tribal councils, not individuals decided major issues such as this. No matter what the working of the document signed in Boston actually read, the fact remains the tribe ignored it completely and had apparently told the Puritans so. See "Instructions from the Massachusetts Colony to John Winthrop, Governor of Connecticut to treat with the Pequots," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 3rd ser., vol. 3 (Cambridge: E. W. Metcalf & Co., 1833), p. 130.


Ibid, l:142.


Wood, New England's Prospect, p. 81.

"Instructions," MHSC, 3rd ser., vol. 3, pp. 129-131. Winthrop, Jr. was instructed to also bring up at the meeting the possible role the tribe had in the killings of two Englishmen on Long Island and an attempt by the tribe to seize a Plymouth trading ship at Pequot Harbor. Apparently the tribe had earlier informed the English that the tribute demanded by the Bay colony under the terms of the "treaty" was not forthcoming. Concerning this development, the Bay wrote Winthrop, Jr., that the tribe "did send but part of it and put it off with this, as to say the old men did neuer consent to the giuing of it." Ibid, p. 130. The letter from Brewster is reprinted in "Jonathan Brewster to John Winthrop, Jr., MHSC, ser. 4, vol. 7 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1865), pp. 67-68, and in Chandler Whipple, The Indian in Connecticut (Stockbridge, MA: Berkshire Travellers Press, 1972), pp. 46-47. The meeting is not mentioned in the contemporary accounts of Winthrop and Bradford. It is not discussed in Black's biography of Winthrop, Jr. either.

James Mooney, "Niantic," in Handbook, Hodge, ed., 2:69; DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut, p. 78. Francis Jennings states in The Invasion of America, p. 227, that the actual killer of Captain Stone was still alive in 1639 "openly flaunting his identity." The Dutch account he uses to back up this assertion, however, recounts a story told to a Dutch West India official by an Indian concerning the killing of a "Captain Soon." This story in no way resembles any given about the death of Stone and his men and it even includes cannibalism! It is reprinted in Narratives, Jameson, ed., p. 202.

Jennings, The Invasion of America, p. 205. Jennings is alone in putting forth this statement. None of the accounts he cites in n10 p. 205 suggest anything to substantiate this
claim. In light of the fact that the Western Niantic shared in the dismal Pequot fate, it is hard to understand his reasoning. See James Mooney, "Niantic," Handbook, Hodge, ed., 2:69.


31Ibid, 1:185, 187; Jennings, The Invasion of America, p. 208 follows many writers in claiming that the Narragansett ruled Block Island. This may be because the Indian name for the island, "Manisses," is translated into Narragansett as "little God." Livermore, A History of Block Island, pp. 10-11, 48-49. However, the word is also translated as "little island" in the Niantic dialect. John C. Huden, ed., Indian Place Names in New England, (New York: Heye Foundation, 1962), p. 95. Salwen, "The Indians of Southern New England and Long Island," p. 172 states that the Pequot controlled the island till 1637. DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut, p. 78 cites Roger Williams in claiming that the tribe lost control of the island to the Niantic in 1634.


33Ibid.

34The idea that some of the killers of Oldham had fled to the Pequot is mentioned in Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, Morison, ed., p. 292. Alden T. Vaughan's simplistic and unsatisfactory recounting of this episode found in "Puritans and Pequots," pp. 259-260, is not changed in either edition of New England Frontier.


36Gardiner, "Relation," MHSC 3rd ser. vol. 3, pp. 140-141. Gardiner was a Dutch soldier-of-fortune hired by the Warwick Patentees to build their fort and to command it for a period of four years. His narrative of the events surrounding the war may be the test contemporary account available. Gardiner feared the Bay would start a war with the Pequots as early as 1636, not enough time for his band, which included his wife, to put up fortifications and plant
their corn so they may survive. He received a promise from Winthrop, Jr. and others that they would try to persuade the Bay colony from starting a war for a year or two till the post was secured. Though Winthrop, Jr. was governor of Connecticut, he lived in Boston where he held a post in the Bay government. Ibid, pp. 137-139.


45 John Underhill, "Nueves From America," MHSC 3rd ser. vol. 6, p. 23; Mason, Brief History of the Pequot War," MHSC 4th ser. vol. 8, pp. 135-139.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Eisenger, Chester E. "The Puritan Justification for Taking the Land." Essex Institute Historical Collections 74 (April 1948): 131-143.


