

**“This day forth shall be a day of
celebration and Thanksgiving
for subduing the Pequots.”**

—Gov. John Bradford, Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1637

After the 1637 massacre of the Pequot village at Mystic, CT, John Bradford, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote: *"Those that escaped the fire were slain with swords; some hewed to pieces, others run through with rapiers, so that they were quickly dispatched and very few escaped... It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire. Horrible was the stink and scent thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them".*

Capt. John Underhill, one of the leaders of the expedition against the Pequots, wrote that the village was surrounded and a musket volley fired, *“which volley being given at breake of day, and themselves fast asleepe for the most part, bred in them such a terrour, that they brake forth into a most dolefull cry, so as if God had not fitted the hearts of men for the service, it would have bred in them a commiseration towards them: but every man being bereaved of pittie fell upon the worke without compassion... This Fort or Palizado, was well-nie an Aker of ground which was surrounded with trees, and halfe trees set into the ground three foot deepe, and fastned close one to another ... most couragiously these Pequeats behaved themselves: but seeing the Fort was to hotte for us, wee devised a way how wee might save our selves and prejudice them, Captaine Mason entring into a Wigwam, brought out a fire-brand, after hee had wounded many in the house, then hee set fire on the West-side where he entred, my selfe set fire on the South end with a traine of Powder, the fires of both meeting in the center of the Fort blazed most terribly, and burnt all in the space of halfe an houre; many couragious fellowes were unwilling to come out, and fought most desperately through the Palisadoes, so as they were scorched and burnt with the very flame, and were deprived of their armes, in regard the fire burnt their very bowstrings, and so perished valiantly : mercy they did deserve for their valour, could we have had opportunitie to have bestowed it; many were burnt in the Fort, both men, women, and children, others forced out, and came in troopes to the Indians, twentie, and thirtie at a time, which our souldiers received and entertained with the point of the sword; downe fell men, women, and children, those that scaped us, fell into the hands of the Indians, that were in the reere of us; it is reported by themselves, that there were about foure hundred soules in this Fort, and not above five of them escaped out of our hands. Great and dolefull was the bloody sight to the view of young souldiers that never had beene in Warre, to see so many soules lie gasping on the ground so thicke in some places, that you could hardly passe along. It may bee demanded, Why should you be so furious (as some have said) should not Christians have more mercy and compassion ? But I would referre you to Davids warre, when a people is growne to such a height of bloud, and sinne against God and man, and all confederates in the action, there hee hath no respect to persons, but harrowes them, and sawes them, and puts them to the sword, and the most terriblest death that may bee : sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents; some-time the case alters : but we will not*

dispute it now. We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.... Our Indians [the Narragansettes that accompanied the expedition against the Pequots] came to us, and much rejoiced at our victories, and greatly admired the manner of English mens fight : but cried mach it, mach it ; that is, it is naught, it is naught, because it is too furious, and slaies too many men. ...

"Captaine Mason, and Captaine Patrick marching overland, burned and spoyled the Countrey betweene the Pequeat and Conetticot river, ...

"The Pequeats having received so terrible a blow, and being much affrighted with the destruction of so many...broke up their tents and Wigwams, and betook themselves to flight... M. Iohn Wilson[’s company] met with many of the distressed Indians, some they slew, others they tooke prisoners."

Capt. John Mason also wrote about the massacre: *"[We] divided our Men : There being two Entrances into the Fort, intending to enter both at once... We called up our Forces with all expedition, gave Fire upon them through the Pallizado; the Indians being in a dead indeed their last Sleep : Then we wheeling off fell upon the main Entrance... We had formerly concluded to destroy them by the Sword and save the Plunder.*

"Whereupon Captain Mason seeing no Indians, entred a Wigwam ; where he was beset with many Indians, waiting all opportunities to lay Hands on him, but could not prevail. At length William Heydon espying the Breach in the Wigwam, supposing some English might be there, entred ; but in his Entrance fell over a dead Indian; but speedily recovering himself, the Indians some fled, others crept under their Beds: The Captain going out of the Wigwam saw many Indians in the Lane or Street ; he making towards them, they fled, were pursued to the End of the Lane, where they were met by Edward Pattison, Thomas Barber, with some others ; where seven of them were Slain, as they said. The Captain facing about, Marched a slow Pace up the Lane he came down...and coming to the other End near the Place where he first entred, saw two Soldiers standing close to the Pallizado with their Swords pointed to the Ground : The Captain told them that We should never kill them after that manner: The Captain also said, We must Burn them ; and immediately stepping into the Wigwam where he had been before, brought out a Firebrand, and putting it into the Matts with which they were covered, set the Wigwams on Fire...and when it was thoroughly kindled, the Indians ran as Men most dreadfully Amazed.

"And indeed such a dreadful Terror did the Almighty let fall upon their Spirits, that they would fly from us and run into the very Flames, where many of them perished. And when the Fort was thoroughly Fired, Command was given, that all should fall off and surround the Fort...

"The Fire was kindled on the North East Side to windward ; which did swiftly over-run the Fort, to the extream Amazement of the Enemy, and great Rejoycing of our selves. Some of them climbing to the Top of the Pallizado; others of them running into the very Flames; many of them gathering to windward, lay pelting at us with their Arrows ; and

we repayed them with our small Shot: Others of the Stoutest issued forth, as we did guess, to the Number of Forty, who perished by the Sword.

"But God was above them, who laughed his Enemies and the Enemies of his People to Scorn, making them as a fiery Oven: Thus were the Stout Hearted spoiled, having slept their last Sleep, and none of their Men could find their Hands : Thus did the Lord judge among the Heathen, filling the Place with dead Bodies !

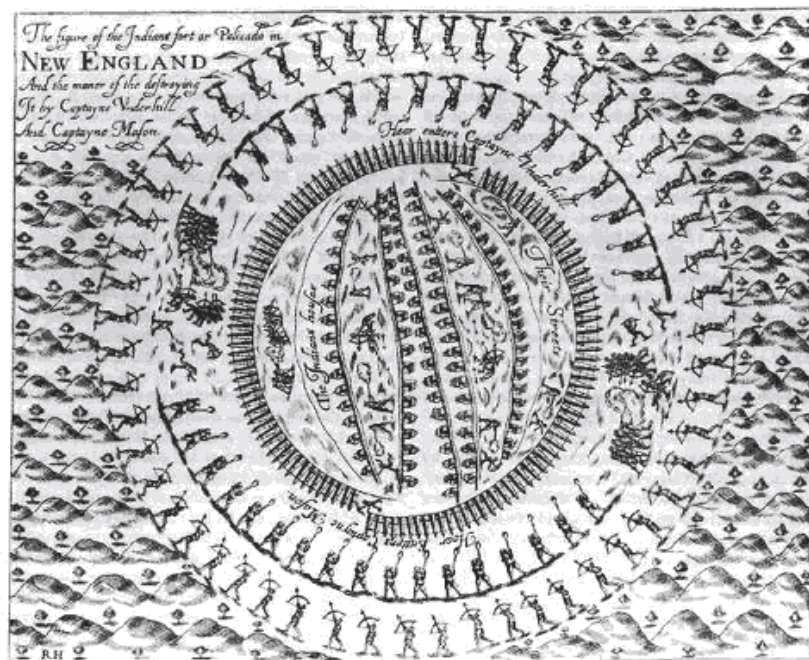
"... And thus in little more than one Hour's space was their impregnable Fort with themselves utterly Destroyed, to the Number of six or seven Hundred, as some of themselves confessed. There were only seven taken captive, and about seven escaped."

Sources:

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"The figure of the Indians fort or Palizado in New England And the maner of the destroying It by Captayne Underhill And Captayne Mason."