

"They Could Not Endure That Yoke": The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637



Michael L. Fickes

The New England Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2000), 58-81.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0028-4866%28200003%2973%3A1%3C58%3A%22CNETY%3E2.0.CO%3B2-C>

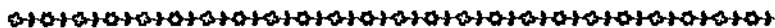
The New England Quarterly is currently published by The New England Quarterly, Inc..

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/neq.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



“They Could Not Endure That Yoke”:
The Captivity of Pequot Women
and Children after the War of 1637

MICHAEL L. FICKES

ACCOUNTS of American Indians abducting white New Englanders have captured the attention of scholars for over three centuries, yet little interest has been shown in a much more common phenomenon—Indians’ captivity among whites.¹ In the first major military engagement of the Pequot War, white New Englanders and their Algonquian allies launched a surprise, pre-dawn assault on a Pequot community near the Mystic River. In the end, they had stabbed, shot, and burned to death between 300 and 700 Pequot men, women, and children. Throughout the years, historians have vigorously debated the

I would like to thank Gary B. Nash, Melissa Meyer, Ruth Bloch, Russ Thornton, Kevin Terraciano, James Drake, David Silverman, Paul Costa, Kariann Yokota, Edie Sparks, James Pearson, Barbara Wallace, Anne Lombard, and Richard Olivas for their advice and encouragement. I am also grateful to the American Philosophical Society, UCLA Graduate Division, and Mystic Seaport for their financial assistance.

¹For an extensive bibliography of scholarly treatments of white New Englanders’ captivity experiences among Indians, see *Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676–1724*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981). More recent works on the topic include John Demos’s *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994); Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney’s “Revisiting the Redeemed Captive: New Perspectives on the 1704 Attack on Deerfield,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 52 (1995): 3–46; Dawn Henwood’s “Mary Rowlandson and the Psalms: The Textuality of Survival,” *Early American Literature* 32 (1997): 169–87; Laura Arnold’s “‘Now . . . Didn’t Our People Laugh?’ Female Misbehavior and Algonquian Culture in Mary Rowlandson’s *Captivity and Restoration*,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 21 (1997): 1–28. Thomas L. Doughton’s paper, “Red Men, Women, and Children in Chains: Enslaved Indians in Eighteenth-Century New England,” presented at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture, 6 June 1998, is one of the few serious examinations of Indian captivity among white New Englanders.

attack from a variety of angles; its aftermath, however, has been reported but not carefully investigated. As the war wound to a close and prisoners were taken, they were sent into the custody of their enemies, both Algonquian and white. The fates of hundreds of Pequot women and children who were forcibly seized by New England colonists during that war in 1637 tell us a great deal about the differing cultures of Native Americans and white settlers in seventeenth-century New England. It is with their story that we can begin to redress the imbalance in how we view captivity in the colonial period.



Following the attack at Mystic, the colonists' Indian allies revealed their repugnance for English tactics when they exclaimed, "mach it, mach it; that is, it is naught, because it is too furious, and slays too many men."² Among the settlers, too, could be heard protestations of the "Great and doleful" proceedings at the fort.³ While the colonial soldiers made a concerted effort to return to a policy of mercy after Mystic, they applied it only to women and children and held firmly to their belief that the Pequot men deserved "severe justice."⁴ In late June, Captain Israel Stoughton and his company captured a group of refugee Pequots about twelve miles from the Pequot River. Immediately executing twenty-two of the Pequot men, they spared the lives of two male sachems and eighty-one women and children. The Pequot sachems managed to prolong their lives, at least temporarily, only by promising to assist their captors in their search for Sassacus, the chief sachem of the Pequots, and "to do great matters for the advancing of the English

²Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1970), pp. 223, 227; John Underhill, *Newes from America*, in *History of the Pequot War: The Contemporary Accounts of Mason, Underhill, Vincent and Gardiner*, ed. Charles Orr (Cleveland: Helman-Taylor Co., 1897), p. 84.

³Underhill, *Newes from America*, p. 81; Ronald Dale Karr, "Why Should You Be So Furious: The Violence of the Pequot War," *Journal of American History* 85 (December 1998): 906.

⁴Philip Vincent, *A True Relation*, in Orr, *History of the Pequot War*, p. 103.

affairs."⁵ The English allotted thirty-three of the captive women and children to their Indian allies and retained forty-eight to fifty for themselves.⁶

In mid-July, in a swamp near the Indian village of Quinni-piac, the English cornered the main body of surviving free Pequots. A minor skirmish offered portents of what was to come. When a scouting party of 21 English soldiers encountered 7 "scouting peccotts," they slew 5 (gender unspecified) and spared 2 women.⁷ Before mounting their main offensive, the English sent a messenger to the besieged Pequots, and he negotiated the peaceful surrender of 180 women and children and 1 or 2 old men. Most of the remaining 80 Indian men attempted to flee or fight their way out of the swamp. While a few managed to escape, the majority were slain by the English forces.⁸ In a final blow, a group of soldiers discovered the last remnant of Pequot men in the heart of the swamp. As they huddled together in "several Heaps," they were summarily executed at close range.⁹

During and shortly after the Pequot War, English forces delivered approximately 300 Pequot captives to colonial settlements at Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut. In addition to the 48 sent by Stoughton in June and the 180 who had surrendered during the swamp fight, another 80 were seized and taken to Boston by Captain Patrick and his troops.¹⁰

⁵Vincent, *A True Relation*, p. 106; Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 158-59.

⁶*Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England," 1630-1649*, ed. James Kendall Hosmer, 2 vols. (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1908), 1:225; *Winthrop Papers, 1498-1654*, ed. Allyn B. Forbes et al., 6 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-92), 3:435.

⁷Richard Davenport, who witnessed the swamp fight, stated that the soldiers spared "2 women" (*Winthrop Papers*, 3:453).

⁸*Winthrop Papers*, 3:453-54, 456-57; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:226-27; Mason, *A Brief History*, p. 38.

⁹William Hubbard, *The Present State of New England, Being a Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England* (Boston, 1677), reprinted in *The History of the Indian Wars in New England from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677*, ed. Samuel G. Drake, 2 vols. (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 2:37.

¹⁰Vincent, *A True Relation*, p. 107.

Counting various small-scale seizures throughout the war, all told the English captured 319 Pequots.¹¹ This figure does not include those captives immediately handed over to Indian allies but may include those who were transferred later.

In his account of the Pequot War, Mason insists that only 180 Pequot captives were taken, but he does not count any Indians who were seized in battles in which he was not involved. Because the captives were immediately sent to English families throughout New England, contemporaries could not easily gauge their numbers. Governor John Winthrop, who helped oversee the captives' dispersal, probably had the firmest grasp of the situation. After the swamp battle, he reported in his journal that English forces had captured and killed about 700 Pequots; earlier he had noted the deaths of about 400 Pequots. The resulting estimate of 300 living, captive Pequots conforms to the combined totals (319) reported by the various chroniclers of the war.¹²

The colonists quickly transported 1 captive to England and 17 more to Providence Island.¹³ Although others may have been shipped out of New England immediately, no evidence survives to verify the conjecture. However, if only 280 Pequot captives remained within Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Plymouth, they would have boosted the colonies' combined total

¹¹Mason recorded that seven Pequots were taken captive at Mystic. Winthrop noted that one Pequot had been captured while he was traveling by canoe near Block Island. Davenport reported that English soldiers captured two women before the Swamp Battle. Edward Winslow described how Captain Underhill "hath violently taken an Pecoat woman from the Dutch which was a sachem's wife and hath her prisoner." Mason, *A Brief History*, p. 31; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:225; *Winthrop Papers*, 3:419, 453.

¹²*Winthrop's Journal*, 1:220, 225, 227.

¹³*Winthrop's Journal*, 1:227-28. Colonial authorities intended to send these captives to Bermuda. Instead, a navigational error resulted in their delivery to Providence Island. Ethel Bossevain claims that Pequots were shipped to Bermuda in 1640 and after 1650. In drawing this conclusion, she relies on the works of James E. Smith and Van Wyck Mason. However, Mason and Smith fail to provide any specific documentation of Pequot slavery in Bermuda; they only cite sources that contain references to Indians of unknown and non-New England origins. See Bossevain, "Whatever Became of the New England Indians Shipped to Bermuda to Be Sold as Slaves?" *Man in the Northeast* 21 (1981): 103-14; Smith, *Slavery in Bermuda* (New York: Vantage Press, 1976), pp. 23-25; Van Wyck Mason, "Bermuda's Pequots," *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, 26 February 1937, pp. 616-20.

population by an estimated 3 percent and the servant population by approximately 18 percent.¹⁴

A scant few of the captives who were pressed into service were male. A Pequot man named Luz and two of his family members were spared because he promised to "conduct them to the Enemies they sought after."¹⁵ Captain Jennsion retained another Pequot after the war apparently because he had English language skills and could serve as an interpreter.¹⁶ John Winthrop's servant Reprieve evidently did not lose his life because he was a Block Island Manissean Indian.¹⁷ Even though the Puritans implicated them in Oldham's murder, Block Island men, for the most part, escaped the massive executions suffered by Pequot males.¹⁸ These men, however, were the exceptions that proved the Puritans' general war policy. "[T]he Squaws and some young youths they brought home with them," Edward Johnson reported, but "finding the men to be deeply guilty of the crimes they undertooke the warre for, they brought away onely their heads as a token of their victory."¹⁹



¹⁴My calculations are based on Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington's 1637 population estimates and Virginia DeJohn Anderson's analysis which demonstrate that servants constituted roughly 17 percent of New England's emigrant population. In 1637, Massachusetts Bay's 7,912 inhabitants, Connecticut's 800, and Plymouth's 549 formed a combined total of 9,261. See Greene and Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1966), pp. 10, 12, 47, and Virginia Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 16-17.

¹⁵Increase Mather, *Relation of the Troubles which have happened in New-England By reason of the Indians there. From the Year 1614 to the Year 1675*, published as *Early History of New England*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Albany, N.Y.: Munsell, 1864), pp. 174-75; Mason, *A Brief History*, p. 37; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:226.

¹⁶*Winthrop's Journal*, 2:7.

¹⁷The name chosen for this Manissean man was telling; Indian men who fought against the colonists lived only if they were reprieved. See *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. Glenn LaFantasie (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1988), 1:127, 129-33.

¹⁸*Winthrop's Journal*, 1:228.

¹⁹Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1910), p. 170. Increase Mather attested to a similar policy: "the English, being willing to shew as much mercy as would stand with justice, did only captivate and not kill the Squaws" (*Relation of the Troubles*,

The colonists likely believed that the acquisition of female Pequot captives would ease some of the problems arising from the scarcity of female laborers in early New England. While New England's gender ratio was considerably more balanced than Virginia's during the early seventeenth century, it was far from even.²⁰ Based on his analysis of forty-six lists of passengers bound for New England between 1620 and 1638, Herbert Moller estimated that the percentage of women among the earliest generation of New England immigrants was about 38.8 percent.²¹ And among the migrating servant population, women were even scarcer (29.8 percent).²² The intensive demand for "husbanding mens time in this country"—that is for performing the traditional male tasks of clearing the land, building fences, fashioning tools, constructing houses and barns, fishing, planting and harvesting crops—would have discouraged men from assisting with "housewifery" in the early years of settlement. Indeed, in the early years of Plymouth Colony, William Bradford reported that "men's wives" were "commanded to do service for other men, as dressing their meat, washing their clothes, etc."²³

The preponderance of male servants taxed colonial mistresses, who were obligated to help provide "all things need[ful] for the maintainance and sustenance" of servants, which, in the

p. 53). New England soldiers' renewed reluctance to kill women conformed to standards of warfare generally accepted by early-seventeenth-century Europeans. Massachusetts magistrates adhered to these same standards when they ordered an invasion of Block Island at the beginning of the war. They commissioned a force of ninety soldiers to "put to death the men of Block Island, but to spare the women and children, and to bring them away, and to take possession of the island." See *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:186; James D. Drake, "The Conduct of King Philip's War," *New England Quarterly* 70 (1997): 33-37; and Barbara Donagan, "Atrocity, War Crime, and Treason in the English Civil War," *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 1141-42.

²⁰Roger Thompson, *Women in Stuart England and America* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1974), p. 26.

²¹Thompson, *Women in Stuart England and America*, p. 26; Herbert Moller, "Sex Composition and Correlated Culture Patterns of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 2 (1944): 115-17.

²²Anderson, *New England's Generation*, p. 25.

²³Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 45; William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 121.

case of Edmund Edward, included "meate, drinke, lodging, & washing."²⁴ And they performed these tasks with considerably fewer female servants to assist them than was customary in England. Based on percentages derived from ships' records, an estimated 1,111 male servants and 463 female servants lived among roughly 9,261 persons in the Plymouth, Connecticut, and Massachusetts Bay colonies in 1637. A similarly sized population in England would have contained approximately 764 male and 716 female servants.²⁵

Mary Dudley's plight suggests the gravity of the situation for colonial wives on the eve of the Pequot War. On 28 April 1636, Dudley urged her mother, for the third time in four months, to send her a maidservant:

Deare Mother, After my bounded duty I still continue to be a troublesome suter to you, in the behalfe of a mayd. I should hardly have made so hold to iterate my request, but such is my necessity that I am forced to crave your help herein as speedily as may be my mayd being goe away upon may day and I am like to be altogether destitute.²⁶

Dudley, like many colonial women, began to bear children almost immediately after migration. When she sent her various requests to her mother, she was tending a two-year-old and an

²⁴Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England*, 12 vols. (Boston: William White, 1855), 1:132.

²⁵A comparison of Peter Laslett's and Virginia Anderson's data suggests that the English servant population's sex ratio was much more balanced than New England's. Women constituted roughly 48.4 percent of servants in England while New England's female servants made up roughly 29.8 percent of the total servant population. I accept Anderson's estimate that servants constituted about 17 percent of the migrating population; however, her assertion that "servants in New England may have been up to twice as common as in England" is ill founded. Laslett has estimated that between 1574 and 1821, servants constituted about 13.4 percent of England's total population. Between 1599 and 1688, the proportion of servants in the towns analyzed by Laslett was even higher, an estimated 15.98 percent. Based on these figures, I have estimated that male and female servants constituted, respectively, 8.25 percent and 7.73 percent of England's total population and 11.91 percent and 5.06 percent of New England's total population. See Anderson, *New England's Generation*, pp. 24-25; and Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 2d ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1973), pp. 262-63, as well as *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 32, 72, 78, 90.

²⁶*Winthrop Papers*, 3:57.

infant.²⁷ Of course, the older female children who had migrated with their Puritan families performed childcare and other household tasks as they had traditionally done in England.²⁸ But the unusually low rate of infant mortality, estimated to be approximately half that of England's, produced a proportionally larger number of dependent young children in the initial years of settlement. Therefore, women had significantly greater responsibilities than they typically had in England.²⁹

The colonists apparently believed that Pequot women and their children could be trained to provide excellent service to help spare the overtaxed Puritan wife. Throughout the early seventeenth century, English commentators repeatedly characterized New England Indian women as hard working and submissive.³⁰ While Indian men "for the most part live idly," engaging in activities like hunting and fishing, "their wives set their Corne and doe all their other worke," wrote Reverend Francis Higginson of Salem.³¹ William Morrell, an early Plymouth resident, derided the Indians' gendered division of labor in his

²⁷James Savage, *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*, 4 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969), 2:77.

²⁸While the Puritan father certainly played a major role in guiding the upbringing of his child, he did not generally perform the everyday tasks of feeding, dressing, and cleaning up after children. Lucy Downing, for one, asserted that the labor needed to take care of her youngest child "was a mayds work" (*Winthrop Papers*, 4:64).

²⁹In 1634 William Wood reported that New England women had more than "double births than [they had] in England." Thomas Morton was similarly astounded by the high birth rate in New England in the early 1630s. Puritan children did not begin performing tasks for their families until they reached five, six, or seven. Furthermore, Vickers argues that the cost of raising a child exceeded the value of his or her labor until the child reached the age of approximately thirteen. See Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen*, pp. 65-66; and Edmund Sears Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 66-67; Vaughan, *New England's Prospect*, pp. 32-33; Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (1632), in *Tracts and Other Papers, Relating Principally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America*, ed. Peter Force (Gloucester, Mass., Peter Smith, 1963), p. 82; and Thompson, *Women in Stuart England and America*, p. 132.

³⁰James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 152-59; David D. Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge': A Prime Index of Savagism," *Ethnohistory* 29 (1982): 292-94.

³¹Francis Higginson, "New England's Plantation," in *Letters from New England*, ed. Everett Emerson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), p. 37.

poem "New-England": "Thus all worke—women doe, whilst men in play / In hunting, armes, and plesures, end the day."³² Christopher Levett, who explored the New England coast in 1623, insisted that Indian men enjoyed a leisurely lifestyle because "[t]heir wives are their slaves, and doe all their worke."³³ Massachusetts Bay attorney Thomas Lechford asserted that New England Indian women "doe most of the labour in planting and carrying of burdens; their husbands hold them in great slavery," and Governor Edward Winslow of Plymouth reported that local Native American women "live a most slavish life: they carry all their burdens, set and dress their corn, gather it in . . . and have all household care lying upon them."³⁴ Because they witnessed Indian women cultivating fields and carrying heavy burdens, tasks typically assigned to men in England, in addition to the duties routinely carried out by English women, English observers assumed that Native American women performed essentially all the work required in their society.

Roger Williams, who interacted with local Native American peoples much more than most of his contemporaries, was one of the few early-seventeenth-century English commentators to acknowledge that both men and women made significant contributions to the New England Algonquian economy. The division of labor Williams described in *A Key to a Language* resembles a partnership more than a master-slave relationship. Not only did Algonquian men take "great paines" in hunting and fishing, but they helped women perform agricultural and do-

³²William Morell, "Morell's Poem on New-England," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st ser. 1 (1792): 135. English explorers and colonists associated hunting and fishing, Indian men's subsistence activities, with the leisurely pursuits of the aristocracy in Old England. See William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), pp. 55–56.

³³Christopher Levett, "A Voyage into New England," in *Forerunners and Competitors of the Pilgrims and Puritans*, ed. Charles H. Levermore, 2 vols. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: The New England Society, 1912), 2:628.

³⁴Thomas Lechford, *Plain Dealing or News from New England* (London: N. Butler, 1642; reprinted, Boston: J. K. Wiggin & William Parsons Lunt, 1868), pp. 115–16; Edward Winslow, "Good News from New England" (1622), in *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers, 1606–1623, A. D. as Told by Themselves, Their Friends, and Their Enemies*, ed. Edward Arber (1897; New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1969), p. 363.

mestic tasks as well. For example, "[w]hen a field is to be broken up . . . men and Women forty, fifty, a hundred & c, joyne, and come in to help freely." During planting or harvesting seasons, "sometimes the man himselfe, (either out of love to his Wife, or care for his Children, or being an old man) will help the Woman." In constructing their houses, Indian men fashioned poles and stakes, while the women covered and lined their homes with mats. Williams also noted that both Indian men and women prepared food for unexpected guests: "If any stranger come in, they presently give him to eate of what they have; many a time, and at all times of the night (as I have fallen in travell upon their houses) when nothing hath been ready, have themselves and their wives risen to prepare me some refreshing."³⁵

Although Williams acknowledged that women's labor was "even above the labour of men"—in other words, that their society was not egalitarian—his insights into the complementary economic roles of the two genders challenged colonial assumptions that Indian men exploited their wives. His contemporaries, however, did not learn from Williams's careful observations. *A Key to a Language* was not published until 1642, and even thereafter, colonial commentators continued to charge that the "extraordinarily idle" and "abominably slothful" Indian males kept "their poor squaws" in a condition of subjection.³⁶

William Wood was one of numerous English observers who claimed that Native American women endured "barbarous treatment" at the hands of their husbands. Three years before the Pequot War, Wood claimed that local Indian women, who contrasted the "inhumane behavior" of their husbands with "the kind usage of the English to their wives," grew "miserable" with their own situation and admiring of the English. In times of despair, Indian women would "resort often to the English houses, where . . . they do somewhat ease their misery by com-

³⁵*The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, ed. J. Hammond Trumbull, 6 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1963), 1:46, 60, 123, 170, 192–93; Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge,'" pp. 294–95.

³⁶Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge,'" p. 293.

plaining and seldom part without relief." In an undoubtedly embellished account, Wood described how colonial wives would extend their protection yet further. "If her husband come to seek for his squaw and begin to bluster, the English woman betakes her to her arms, which are the warlike ladle and the scalding liquors, threatening blistering of the naked run-away [the male, who flees], who is soon expelled by such liquid comminations." As a result of English efforts to shelter them from their husbands, Indian women's "love to the English" was great, and they delighted in showering the English with gifts, "ever presenting them something that is either rare or desired, as strawberries, hurtleberries, raspberries, gooseberries, cherries, plums, fish, and other gifts as their poor treasury yields them."³⁷

The accuracy of Wood's account is less important than its implications. If we extend his logic, we can easily surmise that colonists who took Algonquian women and children into their homes believed that they were protecting Native American women and children from their men, and by employing Indian women and children over a longer term, the English offered the maximum level of security to a group they considered vulnerable. As servants in colonial towns, Indian women and their daughters would be expected to work hard, but they would not be required to do "all worke," as colonial commentators insisted they had done among their own people.

Wood's assertion that Indian women expressed "their love to the English" may strike modern observers as highly unlikely, but early-seventeenth-century colonists probably found it entirely reasonable. Indeed, Wood was not alone in hoping that local Indians would come to love, respect, and attempt to emulate the colonists who were trying to "civilize" them. Matthew Craddock, for example, trusted that the colonists would "drawe [the Indians] to affect our persons, & consequently our religion."³⁸ The authors of *New England's First Fruits* claimed that

³⁷Vaughan, *New England's Prospect*, pp. 112-16.

³⁸Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (Boston: William White Press, 1853-54), 1:384.

the young Native American servants who lived with the colonists after the Pequot War "are much in love with us, and cannot endure to returne any more to the Indians."³⁹

Of course, not all Algonquians whom the English tried to anglicize and christianize saw fit to transfer their loyalties to the English. The Puritans' goals for their Pequot captives were not, in most cases, realized, largely because the Indians had conflicting objectives and had drawn completely different meanings from the events surrounding the war of 1637. The colonists had just murdered many of the captives' husbands, fathers, brothers, and, in the case of Mystic, some of their female relatives as well. The English had forcibly uprooted Indian women and children from the communities in which they had been born and raised, and it was not clear what their fates would be. At the close of the war, a mixed group of Pequots and Narragansetts fled from the English soldiers because "they knew not what Englishmen meant towards them."⁴⁰ Pequots' concerns, of course, were rooted in impressions gathered and sustained over years of contact with Europeans. Native Americans in southern New England still remembered how English sailors, under the false pretense of trade, had kidnapped Indians from the region,⁴¹ and they had also heard gossip of colonists like John Dawe, who had apparently raped a local Indian woman.⁴² Moreover, local Algonquians associated the colonists with the epidemics that had killed many of their family members before the war.⁴³

³⁹*New England's First Fruits* (London: Henry Overton, 1643), reprinted in Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 423.

⁴⁰*Winthrop Papers*, 3:481.

⁴¹Arber, *Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, pp. 453, 475; James Rosier, "The Voyage of George Waymouth," in Levermore's *Forerunners and Competitors of the Pilgrims and Puritans*, p. 335; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 101.

⁴²*Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:127, 155; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:67; *Court of Assistants*, ed. John Noble, 2 vols. (Boston: County of Suffolk, 1904), 2:19.

⁴³Arber, *Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, pp. 527-28; Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, p. 99; Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial* (6th ed., Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1855), pp. 44-45; *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:72.

Shortly after her capture by the English, John Winthrop encountered the wife of the Pequot sachem Mononotto. "One of her first requests," Winthrop reported, "was that the English would not abuse her body and that her children might not be taken from her." Because she had played a major part in ensuring the safety of two Wethersfield girls during their captivity among the Pequots, Winthrop felt obligated to her and apparently honored her wishes. When she reappeared in the historical record two years later, both she and her sons had been freed from captivity.⁴⁴ Williams characterized Winthrop's posture toward Mononotto's wife as "Experimented Kindnes," but such compassionate gestures were highly unusual.⁴⁵ Most captives, including many of the Pequots in Winthrop's care, were not treated well, even though their hopes and fears would have been quite similar to those of Mononotto's wife.

Like most parents across boundaries of time and space, New England Algonquians were devoted to their children. "They are great lovers of their children," John Pory observed during his visit to New England in 1622.⁴⁶ Roger Williams noted that "[t]heir affections, especially to their children, are very strong; so that I have knowne a Father take so grievously the losse of his childe, that he cut and stob'd himselfe with griefe and rage."⁴⁷ Miantonomo, head sachem of the Narragansetts, showed his respect for those affectionate bonds when he suggested that the Pequot captives not be kept as slaves amongst the colonists or themselves "because they were most of them families." Disregarding Miantonomo's recommendation, the colonists proceeded to split apart numerous Pequot families after the war.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Winthrop Papers, 3:457; *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:200.

⁴⁵*Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:200.

⁴⁶John Pory to the Governor of Virginia (Sir Francis Wyatt), in Sydney V. James, Jr., ed., *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth: Letters about the Pilgrim Settlement in New England during Its First Seven Years by John Pory, Emmanuel Altham, and Issack de Rasieres* (Plymouth: Plimoth Plantation, 1963), p. 17.

⁴⁷*Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, p. 58. Isaack de Rasieres echoed Williams in his assertion that New England Indians were fond of their children "beyond measure" (James, *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*, p. 72).

⁴⁸*Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:97, 108-9; *Winthrop's Journal*, 1:227.

One of the only surviving detailed accounts of a Pequot runaway underscores the strength of familial ties among the Pequots. In 1647, William Baulston wrote to John Winthrop, Jr., of Connecticut, on behalf of his neighbor Captain Richard Morris, who had "lately lost his Indean mayde sarvant." Baulston requested Winthrop's assistance in securing the return of the runaway servant or, if necessary, finding a replacement for her. Baulston vividly described the failing health of Morris's wife, who "is in great destres for want of a survant." The Morrises had acquired their servant "from the bay in the time of the pecod warre," when she was only a child, Baulston explained, and they deeply resented that she had abandoned them in their need. Both Baulston and Morris suspected that the young woman had been persuaded "by the intisement of her father and her unkell," and Baulston warned Winthrop that the three Pequots might be planning a rendezvous with the servant's cousin, who was retained by Winthrop. Colonists like the Morrises had to learn the hard way that their Pequot captives had not forsaken their longstanding kinship ties to bind themselves affectionately to the white settlers.⁴⁹

The Pequots discovered during the war of 1637 that the English were capable of inflicting harm on Indians of all ages and both sexes. During the years immediately following the war, their education continued. Pequot captives who attempted to escape immediately after their capture were branded.⁵⁰ One Pequot runaway reported to Roger Williams that she had been raped and subsequently punished, a branding administered by a local magistrate, for her unwilling involvement. She had also been "beaten with firesticks" by some of the servants of her master, Mr. Cole. She made it clear that the branding and the sexual abuse she had suffered were major factors in her decision to flee the colonial settlement. She further reported that "she of all the natives in Boston is used worst," suggesting that the Pequot captives had opportunities to compare their suffer-

⁴⁹*Winthrop Papers*, 5:164-65.

⁵⁰*Winthrop's Journal*, 1:225-26.

ings with other Indian servants, whether Pequots or affiliates of another local tribe.⁵¹

The work environment for Pequot captives pressed into servitude must have seemed intensely foreign. Duties like milking a cow, mending a stocking, or churning butter would have been new to most, and even those tasks European and Indian women had in common—such as transporting a baby or preparing corn—were performed differently.⁵² Moreover, the language gap between English women and their Pequot servants made a challenging situation even more difficult. At the end of the Pequot war, Hugh Peter eagerly requested “a share” of the “dividence of women and children,” but he was sorely disappointed in his expectations. In a letter asking for the services of an English maid, Peter signaled a general English dissatisfaction with Indian servants: “truly wee are so destitute (having none but an Indian) that wee know not what to doe.”⁵³ The lackluster performance that engendered Peter’s frustration is recorded for posterity, but the frustration, or perhaps hostility, of the servant, who had to perform strange tasks for a family of strangers, can only be assumed from the inadequate prosecution of his or her duties.

A quite different view of Indian labor is presented in *New England’s First Fruits*. There the authors report how “Diverse of the Indians Children, Boyes and Girles, we have received into our houses, who are long since civilized, and in subjection to us, painfull and handy in their businesse, and can speak our language familiarly . . . and begin to understand in their mea-

⁵¹*Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:132. Another captive woman, described as an “Indian mayde . . . taken in war,” fled from her master just before she was due to face “publicke punishment” (*Plymouth Records* [Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England, vols. 1 & 2], 9:64, 78; 10:16).

⁵²*Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, pp. 99–101; Vaughan, *New England’s Prospect*, p. 114; Morton, *New English Canaan*, p. 24; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England* (New York: Knopf, 1982), pp. 13–34. In 1640, Lucy Downing wrote to Margaret Winthrop, “I would intreat you if you can hear of a good mayd servant for all work: that is dayry and kitchin,” the primary responsibilities of female servants. See Lucy Downing to Margaret Winthrop, c. August 1640, *Winthrop Papers*, 6:273.

⁵³*Winthrop Papers*, 3:450; 4:139.

sure, the grounds of Christian religion." The authors even suggest that their young Indian servants, in some cases, displayed greater devotion to God and industry in their work than many of the colonists:

Some of them will not be absent from a Sermon or Family duties if they can help it; and we have knowne some would use to weep and cry when detained by occasion from the Sermon.

Others of them are very inquisitive after God and his ways; and being themselves industrious in their Calling, will much complaine of other servants idlenesse, and reprove them.⁵⁴

A promotional tract published in London, *New England's First Fruits* is undoubtedly an embellished account. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that the authors would have gone to such great lengths in describing young Indian servants' religiosity and dedication to their tasks if some progress had not been made. It is also clear, however, that the authors ignore evidence of Indian resistance not only to serving whites but to adopting their religion. In a 1638 journal entry, John Winthrop reported that one of the most powerful gods in the southern New England Indian pantheon appeared to "the Indians, which were in our families" in "diverse shapes" and urged them "to not come at the assemblies nor to learn to read, etc."⁵⁵ This Algonquian religious revival, taking root in the very heart of the Puritan home, suggests that the New England colonists' efforts to christianize their Pequot captives and other Indian servants was not meeting with success.



Most of the Pequot captives, young and old, successfully escaped from their colonial captors before they could be made "serviceable to God and man."⁵⁶ As John Mason reported, "The

⁵⁴*New England's First Fruits*, p. 423.

⁵⁵*Winthrop's Journal*, 1:260.

⁵⁶Alexander Young, ed., *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth from 1602 to 1625* (2d ed., Boston: Little & Brown, 1844), p. 260.

Captives we took . . . we divided, intending to keep them as Servants, but they could not endure that Yoke; few of them continuing any considerable time with their masters."⁵⁷ By 1646, John Josselyn noted that the New England colonists "are well accommodated with Servants . . . of these some are English, other Negroes."⁵⁸ Josselyn's failure to mention Indians among this rising servant class underscores Mason's observation, which was further corroborated by Increase Mather in his *Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England By reason of the Indians there*.⁵⁹ During the next major Anglo-Indian conflict, King Philip's War, Rhode Islander William Harris expressed his fear that recently secured Indian captives "will run all away againe as ye captives formerly did after ye pequot war forty years since."⁶⁰

From the outset, Pequot women and children attempted to escape from their colonial masters. On 6 July 1637, shortly after

⁵⁷Mason, *A Brief History*, p. 39. Two surviving documents refer to the "few" captives who remained with the colonists for a considerable amount of time. An entry in the Middlesex County Court records mentions a Pequot woman who was likely captured in the 1637 war. "Elline a Pequet Servant to Mr Edaward Collines" endured a whipping for fornication in 1655. A second reference to Pequot War captives appears in Stratford land records. When the colonists defeated the Pequots, they also seized female captives from the Pequots' Sashquaket and Poquanocke tributaries. As Thomas Stanton's testimony below indicates, the colonists held these Sashquaket and Poquanocke women in captivity for more than twenty-one years after the war: "A Testimony of Thomas Stanton Recorded . . . 1659 . . . At the cutting [off] of the Pequots all there friends and confederates fled also being under the same condemnation with them. . . . The English conquering the Pequots conquered them also and took Captives from Sashquaket and Poquanocke, for they several of them lived with the Pequots in time of there prosperitie and fought against the English also at Sashquaket, Poquanocke Indians fought against us, likewise some of their women are at [?] . . . and in the Bay [Massachusetts] as captives to this day." See David Pulsipher, ed., *Transcription, Middlesex County Court Records, 1649-1663*, Mass. Archives, 6 vols., 1:71; Roger Thompson, *Sex in Middlesex: Popular Mores in a Massachusetts County, 1649-1699* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), p. 108; Stratford Land Records, 1:473, quoted in Franz Wajciechowski's *The Paugusset Tribes: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Tribal Interrelationships of the Indians in the Lower Housatonic River Area* (Nijmegen, Netherlands: Catholic University of Nijmegen, Department of Cultural and Sociological Anthropology, 1985), pp. 90-91.

⁵⁸John Josselyn, "An Account of Two Voyages to New England," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d ser. 3 (1833): 332.

⁵⁹Mather, *Relation of the Troubles*, p. 150.

⁶⁰William Harris to Sir Joseph Williamson, 12 August 1676, in "Harris Papers," *Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society* 10 (1902): 178.

the English had begun allocating Pequot women and children to colonial families, John Winthrop reported that “[s]ome of them ran away and were brought again by the Indians our neighbors, and those we branded on the shoulder.”⁶¹ Flight was a behavioral strategy the English had earlier observed among New England Indian women. Edward Winslow noted that “[i]f a woman have a bad husband, or cannot affect him, and there be a war or opposition between that any other people, she will run away from him to the contrary party, and there live; where they never come unwelcome, for where are most women, there is greatest plenty.”⁶²

Pequot women contemplating escape from their English captors evidently believed that neighboring Algonquian peoples, with whom the Pequots had been at war, would shelter them, according to traditional practice. The colonists’ imposing military presence, however, temporarily disrupted the custom. Awed by English military conduct during the Pequot War, local Indian groups returned the colonists’ runaway Pequots to avoid angering the English while their troops were still fully mobilized. After colonial military units were called home, however, Indian leaders soon realized that they could incorporate Pequots into their tribes and, through skillful diplomacy, circumvent military retaliation. Local sachems began accusing other Indian leaders of harboring Pequot runaways while vigorously denying their own involvement. The colonists’ efforts to verify various reports were hindered by their own limitations in accurately identifying an Indian’s affiliation.⁶³ Furthermore, runaways were able to hide themselves among the numerous Pequots already living with local Indian groups, who had received the tributaries and adoptees in payment for assisting colonial authorities during the war. Emboldened by their success, local sachems proceeded from full cooperation to subtle resistance to

⁶¹Winthrop’s *Journal*, 1:225–26.

⁶²Young, *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, p. 364. Also see Thomas Shepard’s “Postscript” to “The Letter of Mr. Eliot to T.S. concerning the late work of God among the Indians,” *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d ser. 4 (1834): 63.

⁶³Winthrop’s *Journal*, 1:231; *Mass. Bay Records*, 1:201; *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:112–27; *Winthrop Papers*, 3:481.

daring defiance. Winthrop accused Miantonomo, the Narragansett sachem, of "allureing harbouring and withholding sevall Pecott captives fled from the English, and making proud and insolent returnes when they were redemanded."⁶⁴ Uncas, the Mohegan sachem, surpassed even Miantonomo's audacity by instructing one of his men to "perswade and worck" the escape of one of Winthrop's female Pequot servants because, as Williams noted, Uncas "intended that maide for his wife."⁶⁵

The Pequots who lived with the Narragansetts after the Pequot War, Roger Williams reported, were "used kindly, have houses and goods and fields given to them: because they voluntarily came into them." Mohegans either incorporated Pequots directly into the tribe or made them tributaries. Several of the Mohegans' Pequot tributaries later testified before the Commissioners of the United Colonies that they received "promises of good usage from Uncas." In return for their tribute payments and other forms of fealty, the Pequots expected a certain measure of autonomy.⁶⁶ And yet ties among southern New England tribes like the Mohegans, Pequots, and Narragansetts were strong. Generations of intermarriage had produced similarities in language, religious beliefs, subsistence activities, and familial traditions.⁶⁷ Among the Narragansetts and Mohegans, the two

⁶⁴In September 1646, the Commissioners of the United Colonies complained that the Narragansetts still "have not restored the Indyen fugitives & captives fled from the English" (*Plymouth Records*, 9:50, 75).

⁶⁵*Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:168.

⁶⁶Uncas's promises of "good usage" evidently were not fulfilled. By the mid-1640s, many Pequot tributaries had become disillusioned and were seeking alternative arrangements. The disaffected Pequots living at Namyok petitioned the Commissioners of the United Colonies for permission to "with draw from Uncas" and place themselves under English jurisdiction. They charged that Uncas had extorted excessive amounts of wampum from them, cut their fishing nets, stolen their beans and corn, and defiled the bodies of Pequot women. The difference between this subjugation to the English and that involved in becoming their servants is that here the Pequots maximized their possibilities for independence. Indeed, the importance of the Namyok Pequots' experience is that, in both cases, with Uncas and with the English, they agreed to become tributaries with the expectation of achieving greater autonomy. See *Plymouth Records*, 9:97-99; Eric Spenser Johnson, "'Some by Flatteries and Others by Threatenings': Political Strategies among Native Americans of Seventeenth-Century Southern New England" (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts, 1993), pp. 85-93.

⁶⁷Johnson, "'Some by Flatteries and Others by Threatenings,'" pp. 175, 177, 180-87; William Starna, "The Pequots in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*, ed. Laurence

major tribes who harbored them, the Pequot runaways evidently expected to work, worship, and enjoy family life in a more autonomous and traditional manner than had been possible in colonial captivity.



In 1641, the General Court empowered Lieutenant Simon Willard, Ensign John Holman, and Sergeant Richard Collicott to "demand all Pequoats that were servants or slaves to the English that have runne away wherever they find them."⁶⁸ The recruitment of the three English officers as fugitive servant and slave catchers was just one of the colonists' numerous efforts to retrieve their former Pequot captives.⁶⁹ What is most interesting about this particular effort was the flexible language the General Court chose to describe the status of the Pequot fugitives—"servants or slaves." In 1638, Philip Vincent had used the same phrase when he noted that the colonists were determined to make the Pequots "their servants, their slaves, either willingly or of necessity, and docible enough, if not obsequious."⁷⁰

Early seventeenth-century English meanings of slavery were extremely elastic. Although the term slavery often designated a highly degraded, perpetual situation of bound labor, it was also applied to situations of temporary servitude.⁷¹ In 1640, when the Massachusetts General Court ordered Thomas Savory, a white colonist, "to bee severly whiped, & for his theft to bee sould for a slave until hee have made double restitution," they

M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), pp. 33-47.

⁶⁸Thomas Lechford, *Note-Book Kept by Thomas Lechford, Esq., Lawyer, in Boston, Massachusetts Bay, from June 27, 1638, to July 29, 1641*, in *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* 7 (1885): 434.

⁶⁹As late as July 1649, the Commissioners of the United Colonies were still complaining that "the Indian fugetives belonging to the English were not Returned" (*Plymouth Records*, 9:144).

⁷⁰Vincent, *A True Relation*, p. 110.

⁷¹Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 52-56.

were sentencing him to a temporary form of involuntary labor.⁷² English authorities could thrust their countrymen into "slavery," but they reserved a more abject form of the condition for strangers and captives. As early as 1622, William Gouge, a Puritan minister in Old England, explained that "such servants as being strangers were bond-slaves, over whom masters had more absolute power than others." In 1641, Massachusetts authorities drafted the colony's Body of Liberties, which included the provision that "there shall never be an bond slaverie, villinage or Captivitie amongs us unles it be lawfull Captives taken in just warres, and such strangers as willingly selle themselves or are sold to us." Winthrop Jordan has astutely commented that after the Body of Liberties was circulated, references to English "slaves" were quickly discontinued, which suggests that slavery thereafter came to be defined in harsher terms and associated with non-whites.⁷³

In the period immediately prior to the Pequot War, colonists were less punctilious about the issue of slavery. In 1636, the Massachusetts General Court sentenced a Block Island Indian to "bee kept as a slave for life to worke, unles wee see further cause." It is not certain whether he did in fact remain enslaved his entire life, but it is clear that colonial authorities believed they had the right to hold him if they wished.⁷⁴ Moreover, they ordained that colonists could include Indian captives in their estates. In 1639, John Winthrop wrote in his will: "I give my sonne Adam my Iland called the Governours Garden. . . . I give him also my Indians there and my boate and such household as is there." In 1646, the Commissioners of the United Colonies, representing Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Plymouth, demanded that a Dutch agent, who lived in Connecticut, return an "Indyan mayde" war captive who had fled from her English master. The Commissioners insisted that "Such a servant is parte of her Masters estate, & a more considerable part than a beast, our children will not longe be secure if this be suf-

⁷²*Mass. Bay Records*, 1:297.

⁷³Jordan, *White over Black*, pp. 68-70.

⁷⁴*Mass. Bay Records*, 1:181.

ferred."⁷⁵ Colonial magistrates evidently supported colonists' efforts to treat Indian captives as possessions or bond slaves. The Pequots' resistance and the assistance they received from local Indian groups, rather than colonial authorities' interference, ultimately impeded the colonists' power to anglicize, christianize, and enslave them.

In a 1645 letter to his brother-in-law, John Winthrop, Emmanuel Downing listed the two reasons why he believed a "warr with the Narraganset" would be "verie considerable to this plantation." First of all, Downing maintained that such a war would allow the colonists forcibly to suppress the Indians' "wo[rshi]p of the devill." Second, Downing argued, "If upon a Just warre the lord should deliver them into our hands, wee might easily have men, woemen and Children enough to exchange for Moores." Downing did not suggest keeping captive Indians within the colonies as slaves; instead, he favored exchanging them for Africans, whom he insisted would be more "gaynefull pillage" for the colonists. Contemplating the future of the New England colonies, he asserted, "I doe not see how wee can thrive untill we gett into a stock of slaves suffittient to doe all our busines."⁷⁶

Despite their continued efforts to retrieve Pequot runaways, colonists like Downing had realized by the 1640s that they could not supplement the white labor supply with Indian labor alone. Captain Morris, for one, asked Massachusetts authorities for compensation in 1647 so that he might replace his escaped Pequot captive with an African.⁷⁷ In 1644, Boston traders made their first attempt to import slaves directly from Africa, a sign that local colonists were not satisfied with the small number of black slaves whom they were able to procure from other colonies in the western hemisphere.⁷⁸ Surviving evidence documents only one person with African heritage within New

⁷⁵Winthrop Papers, 4:146; Plymouth Records, 9:64, 78.

⁷⁶Winthrop Papers, 5:38.

⁷⁷Winthrop Papers, 5:164.

⁷⁸Lorenzo Greene, *The Negro In Colonial New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 20.

England's borders before the Pequot War.⁷⁹ A half century after the war, a French traveler, Antoine Court, commented on the proliferation of black domestic laborers: "there is not a house in Boston, however small may be its means, that has not one or two."⁸⁰

By incorporating black slaves into their economy, the colonists expanded their labor pool. However, the colonists did continue to rely upon involuntary Indian labor as they imported greater numbers of black slaves. In 1644, the commissioners of the United Colonies expressed a willingness to coerce both Indian and black laborers, threatening to force "hostile" Indians to serve within New England or "be shipped out and exchanged for Negroes."⁸¹ A desire to be able to manage their involuntary workers apparently motivated some colonists to go through the extra expense of exchanging local Indians for black slaves. Newly imported Africans were no more enthusiastic about performing domestic labor for the colonists than Indians, but unlike the captives of the Pequot War, involuntary black laborers did not have cultural, linguistic, and familial ties to local Indian groups who might assist them with their resistance efforts.



After defeating the Pequots in 1637, New England colonists attempted to press hundreds of Pequot women and children into involuntary servitude. The English colonists had preconceived notions of Indian women as subservient and hard working. To the dismay of the colonists, the predominantly female group of Pequot captives did not prove to be anything like the drone-like women of their imaginations. In the face of what they considered to be highly unsatisfactory circumstances within colonial towns, most of the Pequot captives put aside

⁷⁹Wood, *New England's Prospect*, p. 95. Winthrop Jordan argues that the first blacks arrived in New England in 1637, overlooking William Wood's testimony that a black man had briefly strayed from his master before 1634. See Jordan, *White over Black*, p. 68.

⁸⁰Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England*, p. 20.

⁸¹Jordan, *White over Black*, p. 69.

past animosities with neighboring Algonquian groups. In fleeing from New England towns to Mohegan and Narragansett communities, the runaway captives exhibited their preference for relatively familiar living patterns among local Algonquian peoples. Having failed to recapture most of these runaway Pequots, the colonists increasingly turned to African slavery as a supplemental labor system.

Michael L. Fickes, *a doctoral candidate in early American history at UCLA, is currently writing his dissertation on southern New England Indian work patterns during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.*