

5. Probably the Squaw Sachem of the Montauks on Long Island. The Indian "maidens" (Marie, Jane, and Joan) that RW mentioned in this letter may have been three of the four Long Island women who had sought protection from Miantonomi in the summer of 1637. See RW to Winthrop, 20 Aug. 1637.

6. Not identified.

7. See Jer. 17:13; cf. Rev. 21:6.

To John Winthrop, ca. 1 August 1638¹

[Providence]

Much honoured Sir

The bearer lodging with me, I am bold to write an hasty advertisement [i.e., announcement] concerning late passages. For himself, it seems he was fearful to go farther than forty miles about us, especially considering that no natives are willing to accompany him to Pequat or Monahiganick, being told by two Pequots (the all of Miantunnomue's captives which are not run from him) what he might expect, etc.

Sir, Capt. Mason² and Thomas Stanton landing at Nanhiggon-tick, and at Miantunnomue's denouncing [i.e., declaring] war within six days against Juanemo, for they say that Miantunnomu hath been fair in all the passages with them, Juanemo sent two messengers to myself, requesting counsel. I advised him to go over with beads to satisfy, etc.

He sent four Indians. By them Mr. Haynes writes me, that they confest fifteen fathom there received at Long Island. Thereabout they confest to me, (four being taken of Pequots by force, and restored again,) as also that the islanders say fifty-one fathom, which sum he demanded, as also that the Nayantaquit messengers laid down twenty-six fathom and a half, which was received in part, with declaration that Juanemo should within ten days bring the rest himself, or else they were resolved for war, etc. I have therefore sent once and again to Janemo, to persuade himself to venture, etc. Caunounicus sent a principal man last night to me, in haste and secrecy, relating that Wequash had sent word that, if Juanemo went over, he should be killed, but I assure them the contrary, and persuade Caunounicus to importune and hasten Juanemo within his time, ten days, withal hoping and writing back persuasions of better things to Mr. Haynes, proffering myself (in case that Juanemo

through fear or folly fail) to take a journey and negotiate their business, and save blood, whether the natives' or my countrymen's.³

Sir, there hath been great hubbub in all these parts, as a general persuasion that the time was come of a general slaughter of natives, by reason of a murther committed upon a native within twelve miles of us, four days since, by four desperate English.⁴ I presume particulars have scarce as yet been presented to your hand. The last 5th day,⁵ toward evening, a native, passing through us, brought me word, that at Pawatuckqut, a river four miles from us toward the [Massachusetts] bay,⁶ four Englishmen were almost famished. I sent instantly provisions and strong water [i.e., alcoholic beverage], with invitation, etc. The messengers brought word, that they were one Arthur Peach of Plymouth, an Irishman, John Barnes, his man, and two others come from Pascataquack, travelling to Qunnihicut; that they had been lost five days, and fell into our path but six miles.⁷ Whereas they were importuned to come home, etc. they pleaded soreness in travelling, and therefore their desire to rest there.

The next morning they came to me by break of day, relating that the old man at Pawatuckqut⁸ had put them forth the last night, because that some Indians said, that they had hurt an Englishman, and therefore that they lay between us and Pawatuckqut.

I was busy in writing letters and getting them a guide to Qunnihicut, and inquired no more, they having told me, that they came from Plymouth on the last of the week in the evening, and lay still in the woods the Lord's day, and then lost their way to Weymouth, from whence they lost their way again towards us, and came in again six miles off Pawatuckqut.

After they were gone, an old native comes to me, and tells me, that the natives round about us were fled, relating that those four had slain a native, who had carried three beaver skins and beads for Caunonicus' son,⁹ and came home with five fathom [of wampum] and three coats; that three natives which came after him found him groaning in the path; that he told them four Englishmen had slain him. They came to Pawatuckqut, and inquired after the English, which when Arthur and his company heard, they got on hose and shoes, and departed in the night.

I sent after them to Nanhiggantick, and went myself with two or three more to the wounded in the woods. The natives at first were shy of us, conceiving a general slaughter, but (through the Lord's

mercy) I assured them that Mr. Governour knew nothing, etc. and that I had sent to apprehend the men. So we found that he had been run through the leg and the belly with one thrust. We drest him and got him to town next day, where Mr. James and Mr. Greene endeavoured, all they could, [to save] his life; but his wound in the belly, and blood lost, and fever following, cut his life's thread.¹⁰

Before he died, he told me that the four English had slain him, and that (being faint and not able to speak) he had related the truth to the natives who first came to him, viz. that they, viz. the English, saw him in the [Massachusetts] bay and his beads; that sitting in the side of a swamp a little way out of the path, (I went to see the place, fit for an evil purpose,)¹¹ Arthur called him to drink [i.e., smoke] tobacco, who coming and taking the pipe of Arthur, Arthur run him through the leg into the belly, when, springing back, he, Arthur, made the second thrust, but mist him; that another of them struck at him, but mist him, and his weapon run into the ground; that getting from them a little way into the swamp, they pursued him, till he fell down, when they mist him, and getting up again, when he heard them close by him, he run to and again in the swamp, till he fell down again, when they lost him quite; afterwards, towards night, he came and lay in the path, that some passenger might help him as aforesaid.

Whereas they said, they wandered Plymouth way, Arthur knew the path, having gone it twice; and beside, Mr. Throckmorton met them about Naponset River in the path, who, riding roundly [i.e., quietly] upon a sudden by them, was glad he had past them, suspecting them. They denied that they met Mr. Throckmorton.

The messenger that I sent to Nanhiggontick, pursuing after them, returned the next day, declaring that they showed Miantun-nomu letters to Aquedenick, (which were mine to Qunnihticut,) and so to Aquedenick they past, whither I sent information of them, and so they were taken.¹² Their sudden [i.e., prompt] examination they sent me, a copy of which I am bold to send your worship enclosed.¹³

The islanders (Mr. Coddington being absent) resolved to send them to us, some thought, by us to Plymouth, from whence they came. Sir, I shall humbly crave your judgment, whether they ought not to be tried where they are taken. If they be sent any way, whether not to Plymouth. In case Plymouth refuse, and the island-

ers send them to us, what answers we may give, if others unjustly shift them unto us.¹⁴ I know that every man, quatenus man,¹⁵ and son of Adam, is his brother's keeper or avenger; but I desire to do bonum bene,¹⁶ etc.

Thus, beseeching the God of heaven, most holy and only wise, to make the interpretation of his own holy meaning in all occurrences, to bring us all by these bloody passages to an higher price of the blood of the Son of God, yea of God, by which the chosen are redeemed, with all due respects to your dear self and dear companion, I cease. Your worship's most unworthy

Roger Williams

This native, Will, my servant, shall attend your worship for answer.¹⁷

My due respect to Mr. Deputy [Thomas Dudley], Mr. Bel-
lingham, etc.

Reprinted from Mass. Hist. Soc., *Colls.*, 3d Ser., I (1825), 170–173. Enclosure not found. This letter may have been written in two parts, the first when RW received news about the troubles with Ninigret, and the second when he learned about the murder of Penowyanquis; it is possible that he was interrupted by the emergency created when the crime was discovered. RW began this letter by describing the intended courier, probably an Indian, as having just arrived in Providence from the Narragansett Country; the letter was actually delivered by Will, RW's Indian servant, as indicated in the postscript.

1. The letter is undated, but it must have been written early in August, for Winthrop had time to reply with his advice before RW wrote back to him on 14 Aug.

2. John Mason (1600?–1672) arrived in Massachusetts Bay before 1633, settled at Dorchester, and served as a militia captain. He was one of the leaders of the migration to Connecticut in 1635. In May 1637, he commanded the allied force of English troops and Indian warriors who attacked the Pequot fort at Mystic. Promoted to the rank of major after the war, he served as Connecticut's chief military officer until his death. He also held prominent political offices as a deputy, magistrate, assistant, and deputy governor. For a thorough, albeit outdated, biography see Louis B. Mason, *The Life and Times of Major John Mason of Connecticut: 1600–1672* (New York and London, 1935).

3. Ninigret invaded Long Island in June 1638 and demanded an immediate payment of wampum from the Montauks. He received a small payment, pillaged the villages, and informed the Montauks that he would return at harvest time to collect more tribute. Outraged, the Montauk sachems appealed to Connecticut, asking the authorities there to right the wrongs that had been committed against them, while reminding the magistrates that, according to an earlier agreement, they were already paying tribute to Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay. See Roger Ludlow to John Winthrop, 3 July 1638, *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 43–45. The Connecticut officials sent John Mason and seven men to Niantic to demand satisfaction from Ninigret and to threaten war if the sachem refused to comply. After trying to circumvent the English demands by sending emissaries to explain his

position and after attempting to soften the reaction of the Connecticut officials by giving them part of the wampum he had received from the Montauks, Ninigret finally appeared in person before the Connecticut magistrates "and gave full satisfaction for all injuries." See Winthrop, *History*, I, 320-321. But Ninigret's desire to subject the Montauks to Eastern Niantic dominance did not subside in the wake of his diplomatic defeat. During the summer of 1653, Ninigret attacked the Montauks again and fought a long war to bring them to their knees. His only success, however, was in raising English suspicions about him. On this later war see RW to General Court of Massachusetts Bay, 5 Oct. 1654. See also Leicester Bradner, "Ninigret's Naval Campaigns against the Montauks," R.I. Hist. Soc., *Colls.*, XVIII (1925), 14-19; Sehr, "Ninigret's Tactics," 43-53.

4. The murdered Indian was named Penowyanquis. See Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Recs. of New Plymouth*, I, 96. William Bradford thought he was a Narragansett (Bradford, *History*, II, 264), but Massasoit, the Pokanoket sachem, told RW that the Indian had been born a Nipmuck (see RW to Winthrop, 14 Aug. 1638).

5. That is, the fifth day of the previous week, perhaps Thursday, 26 July.

6. In the vicinity of modern Pawtucket, R.I., on the Blackstone River.

7. It is not clear which one of the four was an Irishman (though RW implied that Peach was Irish) or which one was "John Barnes, his man." The four men were Peach, Thomas Jackson, Richard Stinnings, and Daniel Cross. See Bradford, *History*, II, 263. The Plymouth records reveal no connection between Barnes and any of the four accomplices. Jackson and Cross may have formerly lived at Piscataqua, although Bradford pointed out that Peach's followers were all "other mens servants and apprentices" from Plymouth. See *ibid.*, II, 264.

Arthur Peach had served with distinction in the Pequot War. The evidence suggests that he first settled in Massachusetts Bay, probably in the early 1630s. Winthrop, who seems to have known him, described Peach as a "young man of good parentage and fair condition." See *ibid.*; Winthrop, *History*, I, 323. After the war, Peach moved to Plymouth and became indentured to Edward Winslow, a former governor of the colony (see RW to Winthrop, 14 Aug. 1638). Lazy and shiftless, Peach apparently spent more money than he earned, and his debts soared. He soon fell into "idle courses and company." Peach took a liking to Dorothy Temple, a house servant indentured to Stephen Hopkins, but his affections cooled when he learned that the woman was pregnant. Faced with certain punishment for the crime of fornication, Peach decided to flee to New Amsterdam and persuaded Jackson, Stinnings, and Cross to accompany him. See Bradford, *History*, II, 264. Not much is known about Peach's three partners in crime. Stinnings in 1635 had hired himself out to Robert Bartlett for nine years. See Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Recs. of New Plymouth*, I, 35. Jackson and Cross are not mentioned in the Plymouth records, except for their involvement in the murder.

8. Probably William Blackstone.

9. Probably Mixanno, who later had the primary responsibility of overseeing the affairs of the Nipmucks, tributaries of the Narragansetts (see RW to General Court of Massachusetts Bay, 7 May 1668).

10. Actually RW did not witness Penowyanquis's death. See Winthrop, *History*, I, 323. However, RW did later write an account of the suffering Penowyanquis had experienced from his wounds: "I was once with a *Native* dying of a wound, given him by some murtherous *English* (who rob'd him and run him through with a Rapier, from whom in the heat of his wound, they suffered Death at new *Plymouth*, in *New-England*, this *Native* dying call'd much upon *Muckquachuckquand*, which of other *Natives* I understood (as they belived) had appeared

to the dying young man, many yeares before, and bid him when ever he was in distresse call upon him." See *Key into the Language of America* (1643), *Complete Writings*, I, 209–210.

11. The attack on Penowyanquis took place at Misquamsqueece, located in modern Seekonk, Mass. See Bradford, *History*, II, 267; Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Recs. of New Plymouth*, I, 96.

12. Bradford said the Narragansetts fooled Peach and his accomplices by giving them an escorted passage to Aquidneck Island; he implied that "by subtelty" the Indians had transported the four Englishmen to Portsmouth, the nearest English settlement, and had turned them over to the authorities there. See Bradford, *History*, II, 265–266. Bradford's version seems more believable than RW's claim that the men were not arrested until after he had sent word of their crime to Portsmouth. Such a delay would have given Peach and his friends plenty of time to escape.

13. Enclosure not found.

14. The area where the assault and robbery occurred, according to Winthrop, was not under the jurisdiction of any English colony. See Winthrop, *History*, I, 321. Bradford and Morton, however, agreed that Massachusetts Bay had acknowledged the area to be within Plymouth's jurisdiction, although Bradford wryly noted that Massachusetts Bay later claimed the Seekonk lands (and presumably the place called Misquamsqueece) during a subsequent boundary dispute with Plymouth. See Bradford, *History*, II, 267; Morton, *Memorial*, 139.

Answering RW's queries, Winthrop suggested that because the area was outside English jurisdiction, and because the Portsmouth settlers, who held Peach and his cohorts in custody, had not established a government (meaning a legitimate government under a royal charter), "it would be safest to deliver the principal [that is, Peach], who was certainly known to have killed the party, to the Indians his [Penowyanquis's] friends, with caution that they should not put him to torture, and to keep the other three to further consideration." Apparently Winthrop wanted no part in having to decide the fate of the prisoners. His recommendation became moot, however, when Plymouth asked the Aquidneck settlers to extradite the suspected murderers. See Winthrop, *History*, I, 321–322. On the trial and execution of Peach and two of his accomplices see RW to Winthrop, after 21 Sept. 1638. The events surrounding the murder and trial are reconstructed and examined in Glenn W. LaFantasie, "Murder of an Indian, 1638," *R.I. History*, XXXVIII (1979), 67–77.

15. "Seeing that he is man" or "considered as man."

16. "To do good by good means."

17. Will, RW's Indian servant, has not been identified, nor does his name appear in any other source, though he may have been the Pequot captive whom RW received from Winthrop in the summer of 1637. See RW to Winthrop, 31 July 1637.