

# DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FORTIFIED TOWN OF PLYMOUTH, 1620-1628

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## I - Platform for Ordnance built on the hill, 1620

Wednesday, February 21, 1621- Edward Winslow and William Bradford

. . . the master came on shore with many of his sailors, and brought with him one of the great pieces, called a minion [a cannon with 33 inch bore, firing 2 lb shot], and helped us to draw it up the hill, with another piece that lay on shore, and mounted them, and a saller [a misprint for saker, a cannon with 4 inch bore, firing a six pound shot], and two bases [small cannons with 13 inch bore, firing 2lb shot].

Ibid., p. 50

## III - Building of the Fort, June 1622 - March 1623

1622- Edward Winslow and William Bradford

The deaths of 347 English settlers in Virginia on March 22, 1622, that took place during the uprising of the Powhattan under the leadership of Opechancanough, have been believed to be the reason for the building of the fort at Plymouth. It seems clear, though, that it was the threat of attack from the Narragansett and the Wampanoag which was the initial motivation for building the fort, strongly reinforced by the news from Jamestown. It is not clear as to when the letter from Captain John Huddleston, warning the Plymouth colonists of the massacre, was received. All we know is that it arrived "amidst these straits" (the arrival of Weston's sixty settlers at the end of July and early August 1622, and increasing famine), via a "boat which came from the eastward . . . from a stranger of whose name they had never heard before, being a captain of a ship come there a-fishing." Bradford then reprints the letter, from John Huddleston, whom Morison notes was master of the

Bona Nova of 200 tons. Huddleston gave the Plymouth settlers warning of the massacre by Indians which had taken place in Virginia of 400 English. Winslow was sent to meet Huddleston with a letter of appreciation from the Governor, and to ask for any food supplies which he could spare, and Huddleston provided what he could. It was not a great deal, and was given out as daily rations, but it sustained them until harvest, giving the inhabitants a quarter of a pound of bread per day per person, supplemented by whatever else they could get.

This summer they built a fort with good timber, both strong and comely, which was of good defense, made with a flat roof and battlements, on which their ordnance were mounted, and where they kept constant watch, especially in time of danger. It served them also for a meeting house and was fitted accordingly for that use. It was a great work for them in this weakness and time of wants, but the danger of the time required it; and both the continual rumors of the fears from the Indians here, especially the Narragansetts, and also the hearing of that great massacre in Virginia, made all hands willing to dispatch the same.

Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, p.111