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Landscape, Memory, and Public Archaeology: An Ethnographic Study of Stakeholder Communities and Conflict Archaeology at the Battle of Mystic Fort

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LANDSCAPE, MEMORY, AND PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY
OF STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES AND CONFLICT ARCHAEOLOGY
AT THE BATTLE OF MYSTIC FORT

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: Landscape, Memory, and Public Archaeology: An Ethnographic Study of Stakeholder Communities and Conflict Archaeology at the Battle of Mystic Fort

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Beginning in 2009, researchers from the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center began fieldwork in fulfillment of a grant from the National Park Service. This study focused on the Pequot War, which occurred in southeastern Connecticut from 1636-1638. The key event during the war was the Battle of Mystic Fort, in which English soldiers and their Narragansett and Mohegan allies attacked and razed a Pequot fort, killing over 400 tribal members. The archaeological research project sparked both interest and criticism from various stakeholders, resulting in months of public outreach to garner support. In an effort to identify the range of stakeholder perspectives associated with the archaeological research and to assess the success of public outreach efforts, ethnographic interviews were conducted with English descendants, Pequot descendants, and landowners living near the battlefield. This thesis serves as an assessment of stakeholder concerns and specific challenges relating to this community archaeology project.