

King Philip's War Primary Source

"Metacom Relates Indian Complaints about the English Settlers, 1675"

This is an excerpt from a larger primary source account. The full account can be found on the History Matters website. The source is John Easton, "A Relation of the Indian War" in *A Narrative of the Causes Which Led to Philip's Indian War* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1858), 5-15.

Metacom or King Philip, leader of the Wampanoagas near Plymouth Colony, led many other Indians into a widespread revolt against the colonists of southern New England in 1675. The conflict had been brewing for some time over a set of longstanding grievances between Europeans and Indians. In that tense atmosphere, John Easton, Attorney General of the Rhode Island colony, met Philip in June of 1675 in an effort to negotiate a settlement. Easton recorded Philip's complaints, including the steady loss of Wampanoag land to the Europeans; the English colonists' growing herds of cattle and their destruction of Indian crops; and the unequal justice Indians received in the English courts. This meeting between Easton and Metacom proved futile, however, and the war (which became the bloodiest in U.S. History relative to the size of the population) began late that month. This account excerpt details Metacom lodging his complaints against the English settlers.

"But Philip charged it to be dishonesty in us to put off the Hearing the just Complaints, therefore we consented to hear them. They said they had bine the first in doing Good to the English, and the English the first in doing Rong; said when the English first came, their King's Father was as a great Man, and the English as a littell Child; he constrained other Indians from roning the English, and gave them Corn and Land than now the King had for his own Peopell. But their King's Brother, (Massasoit) when he was King, came miserably to die by being forced to Court, as they judge poisoned. And another Greavance but one of their worst Indians testified that a Englishman had dun them Rong, it was as nothing; and if but one of their worst Indians testified against any Indian or their King, when it pleased the English it was sufficient. Another Grievance was, when their King sold land, the English would say, it was more than they agreed to, and a Writing must be prove against all them, and some of their Kings had dun Rong to sell so much. He left his Peopell none, and some being given to Drunknes the English made them drunk and then cheated them in Bargains, but now their Kings were forewarned not for to part with Land, for nothing in Comparison to the Value thereof. Now home the English had owned for King or Queen, they would disinherit, and make another King that would give or sell them these Lands; that now, they had no Hopes left to keep any Land. Another Grievance, the English Catell and Horses still increased; that when they removed 30 Miles from where English had any thing to do, they could not keep their Corn from being spoiled, they never being used

to fence, and thought when the English bought Land of them they would have kept their Catell upon their owne Land. Another grievance, the English were so eager to sell the Indians Lickers, that most of the Indians spent all in Drunkness, and then ravened upon the sober Indians, and they did believe often did hurt the English Cattel, and their King could not prevent it. We knew before, these were their grand Complaints, but then we only endeavored to persuaid that all Complaints might be righted without War, but could have no other Answer but that they had not heard of that Way for the Governor of Yorke and an Indian King to have the Hearing of it. We had Cause to think in that had bine tendered it would have bine accepted. We endeavored that however they Should lay down the War, for the English were too strong for them: they said, then the English should do to them as they did when they were too strong for the English.”