

Document A: John Easton's Account (Modified)

John Easton, a Rhode Island official, met Metacomet on June 16, 1675, to try to prevent war between the colonists and the Native Americans. However, the negotiations failed and fighting broke out within days.

In the winter in the year 1674, an Indian was found dead in a pond. The dead Indian was called Sassamon. He was a Christian who could read and write. It was said that he was a bad man and that he tried to cheat King Philip. One Indian informed the English colonists that three other Indians had murdered Sassamon, knowing that it would please the English. The three Indians were hung by colonists.

It was reported that before his death Sassamon had informed the colonists of the Indian Plot to destroy the English for their wickedness. So the English were afraid and Philip was afraid and both increased their arms. About a week before war broke, we suspected it would. To try to prevent it, we sent a man to Philip, to ask if he would meet with us.

King Philip agreed to come to us. He and his men said that they had done no wrong but that the English wronged them. We said we knew the English said the Indians wronged them, but our desire was to avoid fighting. The Indians acknowledged that fighting was the worst way. . . .

They said when the English first came, their king's father was as a great man, and the English were as a little child; he prevented other Indians from wronging the English, and gave them corn and showed them how to plant, and let them have 100 times more land than now the king had for his own people. They believe their king's brother, when he was king, was poisoned by the colonists.

Another grievance was, if 20 of their honest Indians testified that an Englishman had done them wrong, 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 he owed them more than they had agreed to.

Source: John Easton, "True Relation of what I know and of Reports and My Understanding Concerning the Beginning and Progress of the War now Between the English and the Indians," 1675.