

Signed sealed & delivered  
in presence of  
J Redknapp Nathl Rogers Signum Quale beoneses

## CONFLICT COMES TO PORTSMOUTH

In the decade following the accords of 1713-14, Portsmouth was a hub of mercantile activity and settlement. The newly-confident English renewed their building and trade, while those who had fled the Maine coastal settlements in fear of attack found the chance to rebuild their lives in Portsmouth.

Conflict flared in the Piscataqua, possibly all because of one incident. In 1676, about 100 Nipmuc refugees from King Philip's War in Rhode Island and Connecticut took shelter with the New Hampshire Pennacook. The Governor of Massachusetts asked Richard Waldron, who maintained a trading post with the Pennacook in Concord, to bring the refugees to Boston for punishment. On September 7, 1676, Waldron arranged a meeting of his militia, his friends the Pennacook and the refugees in Dover. He proposed a war game and then seized the natives and sent them to Boston. The Pennacook were released but some of the captives were hanged and others were sold into slavery in Barbados. This severe violation of every standard of First Nations hospitality would not go unanswered.

On June 27, 1689, a group of Wabanaki and their French allies attacked Cocheco (Dover) where Waldron lived, killing twenty-three settlers and taking twenty-nine others captive -- a quarter of the population of the settlement. The attacking band, including Madockawando, executed Waldron for his treachery. The Oyster River (Durham) settlement was attacked in August and eighteen settlers were killed.



Night attack of Indians on Major Waldron's House, Dover, N.H

Five years later, On July 18, 1694, another band of Wabanaki attacked the Oyster River (Durham) settlement for the second time. Three days later, on July 21, a band of Wabanaki attacked and killed Ursula Cutt, widow of prominent Portsmouth citizen John Cutt, whose farm was located on the river on the outskirts of Portsmouth. Recent research suggests that the attack on Ursula may have been because she was known to be a friend of the Waldron family (Cutt's daughter Hannah married Richard Waldron's son). Two contemporary accounts report the attack:

July 21: "Mrs Ursula Cutt ... was slain by Indians as they were busy about hay upon her plantation near Boiling Rock. [After the Oyster River attack] the friends of Mrs. Ursula Cutt desired her to leave her farm, which was about a mile above the Bank exposed to the enemy, on the South side of the Piscataqua River. She thanked them for their care; but added, that she believed the enemy had now done their Do for this time; and however, by the end of the week her business at the farm would all be dispatched, and on Saturday she would repair to her friends at the Bank. But alas! Before the end of the week, she saw the end of her life."

-- Rev. John Pike, *Diary*

On Saturday [July 21], about one or two a clock in the afternoon, the business of the farm was dispatched sure enough! The Indians then killed this gentlewoman and three other people, a little before they had finished a point of husbandry then in their hands.

-- Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*

The only other attack on Portsmouth itself came in 1696. On June 26, a band of Wabanaki who left their canoes at Rye, attacked the settlement at Sagamore Creek and then traveled up through the marshes to attack the inhabitants of Portsmouth Plains. Pursued by the English, the Wabanaki and their captives were surprised at breakfast on the hill above Rye. Breakfast Hill is named for this event.

June 26: "The Indians fell upon Sagamores Creek & Sherburne's plain, killed \_\_ persons, burned 3 houses & carried away four captives, wch were soon retaken."

-- Rev. John Pike, *Diary*

"And on June 26, at several places within the confines of Portsmouth, several persons, twelve or fourteen, were massacred (with some homes burnt) and four taken, which yet were soon retaken; among whom there was an ancient woman scalpt for dead..."

-- Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*



Inventory of Ursula Cutt's possessions at the time of her death. As the widow of John Cutt, her inventory shows the material possessions of a wealthy widow.  
Photo Sandra Rux