

Signed Sealed & Delivered
in presence of

DIPLOMACY OF THE DAWNLAND

J. Redknapp

Nathl. Rogers

Signum



Qualebecensis

“While European officials focused on the written products in their diplomatic interactions with the First Nations, Wabanaki leaders emphasized the collaborative process of treaty making, including council meetings, where indigenous delegates relied on the spoken word to protect aboriginal rights and secure favorable relationships for their communities.”

-- The Native American Studies program at the University of Maine at Orono

THE LANGUAGE OF SUBMISSION

The meeting in Portsmouth in July 1713 was not the first between Governor Dudley and representatives of the First Nations. Five previous treaties had attempted to agree on trade issues and on the extent of forts and settlements in Wabanaki territory that the English had claimed before being driven out by the wars. Both sides understood the need to end the warfare. The Wabanaki wanted three things: 1) the limitation of English expansion so that the Nations could preserve their culture on the seasonal hunting, fishing and planting grounds; 2) trustworthy trade partners in more convenient trading locations; and 3) diplomatic protocols including the exchange of gifts. Governor Dudley's speeches that were translated to the Wabanaki asked permission for the English to return only as far as their earlier forts and settlements and promised fair trade. Dudley needed proof to show the Queen and his own settlers that England was in control of the disputed land and that the Wabanaki would no longer ally with the French. The written treaty contained language of Wabanaki submission to the English Crown.

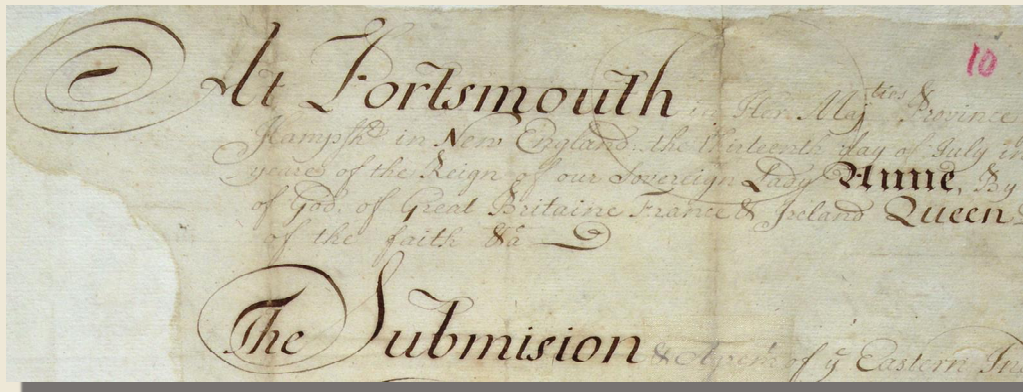


Image of the 1713 Treaty of Portsmouth (Courtesy: British Library)

“There is not one savage Tribe that will patiently endure to be regarded as under subjection to any Power whatsoever; it will perhaps call itself an ally, but nothing more.”

-- Sebastien Rasles at Norridgewock 1694-1724

The Wabanaki understood the spoken word of the English differently than the written words of submission. The Wabanaki granted the English the permission they sought to return to their former forts and settlements and did not consider this submission. Both sides accepted the written Treaty as a symbol of friendship. After 1713, peace brought prosperity to Portsmouth because Dudley practiced the diplomacy that was the pragmatic answer for the Crown, for the colonies and for the Wabanaki,

“I see some amongst you with whom I have had formerly a friendship.... out of friendship and respect for them I come.”

-- Gov. Joseph Dudley

“... the Englishman himself disavows [his words] in my presence, when he reads and interprets them to me himself... If, then, any one should produce any writing that makes me speak otherwise, pay no attention to it, for I know not what I am made to say in another language, but I know well what I say in my own.”

--Sauguaram, Penobscot 1727



Massachusetts Colonial Governor Joseph Dudley, c. 1682-1686, by an unknown artist. (Source: Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA)