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### Germes, Pigs and Silver: King Philip's War and the Deconstruction of the Middle Ground In New England

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#### Abstract

Early in the seventeenth century Algonquians peoples of southern New England and English colonists built a middle ground which benefitted both groups. Trade, the existence of competition from Dutch and French colonies and powerful Algonquian tribes maintained this middle ground. However, as trade items, such as beaver pelts and wampum became rare or lost value and continued English immigration to New England weakened Dutch claims to the area, the middle ground began to crumble. As English-style farms and livestock changed the ecology of New England and the colonists sought to assert their will, Algonquians lost the ability to live as their ancestors had done for millennia, land and their places in society. The Wampanoag sachem, Metacom, or Philip, and his Native allies fought a bloody war against the English and their Native allies to force the colonists back to the middle ground. The English victory in King Philip's War (1675-76) signaled the end of the middle ground in New England and Native sovereignty in the region.

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Year. 1675. King Philip's War begins. In colonial New England, King Philip's War begins when a band of Wampanoag warriors raid the border settlement of Swansee, Massachusetts, and massacre the English colonists there. In the early 1670s, 50 years of peace between the Plymouth colony and the local Wampanoag Indians began to deteriorate when the rapidly expanding settlement forced land sales on the tribe. Reacting to increasing Native American hostility, the English met with King Philip, chief of the Wampanoag, and demanded that his forces surrender their arms. The Wampanoag did so, but in 1675 'The Pig War' is perhaps one of the most obscure and unusual wars in history. The story begins back in 1846 when the

Oregon Treaty was signed between the US and Britain. Around this region the treaty stated that the border be through 'the middle of the channel separating the continent from Vancouver's Island.' As you can see from the map below, simply drawing a line through the middle of the channel was always going to be difficult due to the awkward positioning of the islands. Griffin owned quite a few pigs and was well known for letting them roam freely across the island, and this was probably not the first time that one of them had trotted onto Cutlar's land. When Griffin found out about the death of the pig, he went to confront Cutlar.