12 pt

While there are a few archaeological hints that there have been earlier settlements in the Dart Bay area—some of human, and some of decidedly non-human origin—Dartmouth only truly came into its own as a city in Atalan times. The Atalan Empire needed a major port to support their northern provinces, and the Dart Bay was an ideal location and continued to operate as long as the Empire existed, though it was eclipsed at times by more northern ports at the sites of Torburg and Rondhaven.

11 pt

After the city was sacked by a marauding orcish horde during the fall of the Empire, the city remained nearly uninhabited for over a century. This gradually changed as the region recovered and slowly returned to civilization. As feudal structures established themselves, Dartmouth became the capital of Wirland, a kingdom covering much of the south-western Flannish region. While its borders shifted and grew and dynasties rose and fell, the city gradually expanded as more and more people left their homes to seek opportunities in the "Big City".

10 pt

This movement was temporarily stopped by the outbreak of the "Shambling Plague" in Dartmouth and the surrounding areas in 965. This vile disease was not only fatal if not treated by magical means, but it also caused the victim to rise again as a zombie at the next sunrise that attacked still living people, either infecting them or killing them outright. The fighting between the living and the dead was fierce, and the city was nearly abandoned to the walking dead, but eventually the living prevailed (though at a high cost). Many of the dead were burned on gigantic funeral pyres, but other bodies were simply dumped into the cave systems below the city through deep wells that were sealed afterwards—and which remain sealed to this very day, for no one knows how long the plague will remain infective, and no one but a madman would wish to try to find out.

9 pt

A notable development during feudal times was the establishment of the Wirland Parliament in 991 NA, a body consisting of the landed nobles of Wirland who could first only air their grievances in it, but later gained additional powers—they could propose laws, veto taxes proposed by the king, and finally got some measure of control over the budget of the kingdom. This set a precedent for later forms of government that were much less hierarchical than those elsewhere.

8 pt

This state of affairs came to an end with the invasion of Negroth the Doombringer. The reigning king, John III (now also known as "John the Fat", "John the Coward" and a variety of other, even less flattering names) was initially dismissive of the threat Negroth represented and only sent a small force to the Fields of Harrow, and when news arrived of their crushing defeat, he became absolutely terrified. While the army of Wirland was still fairly large and might have been able to mount an effective resistance to the forces of Negroth if led by a competent strategist (though this is debated even today, since Negroth's forces were very strong—war games at the Dartmouth Academy of War that use this conflict as a setting are popular, but remain inconclusive), the King insisted on drawing back all available forces to Dartmouth to protect the capital (and, of course, him). He lived in constant fear of assassination (probably exaggerated, since Negroth could hardly have wished for a better enemy than him) while the armies of Negroth ravaged the countryside, leading to serious food shortages and outbreaks of plagues among the refugees hiding behind the city wall. When the invaders began to assault the city, the king and most of the nobles simply teleported out of the city to the Parginian Rim (where their descendants live even today), leaving the citizens to their fate. One noble, Eldwen of Hecanshire, mounted a spirited defense and tried to protect the inhabitants as long as possible, but he merely delayed the inevitable. When he fell while trying to stop a breach in the wall, the defenses crumbled and the invaders ravaged the city.