

## THE MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

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BY JOHN H. EDMONDS

THE Massachusetts Archives consist principally of papers relating to legislation, deposited there pursuant to law from 1630, to date; but they contain many not mentioned in the Massachusetts Bay Records, Province Laws or Acts and Resolves.

The Secretary always has been in charge of said manuscripts belonging to Colony, Province, State and Commonwealth, but from 1897 has deputed his authority to the Chief of the Archives Division.

The Archives first attracted the attention of the legislature on Feb. 3, 1821, when the House of Representatives ordered that the Secretary of the Commonwealth be directed to make out a statement of "the then present condition of the public records and documents belonging to the Commonwealth and showing what progress had been made in the copying of the same," the said report to be presented at the next session.

On April 17 the Secretary reported, and two hundred and fifty copies were ordered printed, making a nineteen-page pamphlet. The following extracts have been made on account of their special interest:

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, April 17, 1821.

As directed by an order of the Honorable the House of Representatives, of the 13th of February last, the undersigned, Secretary of the Commonwealth, has examined into the *present condition* of the *public records and documents* belonging to the Commonwealth, "in the Secretary's Office," or connected therewith: And now presents a "*statement*" and

schedule thereof, "shewing the progress which has been made in copying said records," and specifying what volumes of records, files of Court papers, printed volumes and pamphlets, plans, maps, and other documents are now in the Office; and what deficiencies appear, upon such examination.

When the undersigned came into the office, nearly nine years ago, the records of the General Court (which are made in the Secretary's office) were three Sessions in arrears. They were completed with all possible despatch, at the same time, that the usual and ordinary copying and recording were attended to: And for the last six years, the records of each respective Session have been finished by the next succeeding Session of the Legislature. And they are now complete and perfect, up to the present time. The records of the Supreme Executive Council have also invariably been made up in the recess of each respective Session of that Honorable Board; and are complete.

All commissions, (except those for Justices of the Peace and Coroners,) and all warrants for pardon, proclamations, &c. are also recorded; and are always done soon after they are issued, generally within thirty days. Of the appointment of Justices and Coroners, whose commissions are not recorded at length, there are three distinct and separate records, as to date, particular office, and place of abode. This was the practice when the undersigned came into the office.

In 1725, Mr. Secretary *Willard* was ordered to have the records of the Court copied. In 1734, he was directed to have *duplicates* made out to that time. And in 1747, the year the Province House [i. e. Old State House] was burnt, and some of the files and records destroyed by the fire, there was an order of the Court, that their records should be copied, so as to have duplicates complete; "that the Secretary improve as many Clerks as he might judge necessary for the purpose; and that when finished, they be kept in a separate place."

From time to time, since the undersigned has been in the office, (as was before the practice,) when any Clerk had finished the recording and copying usually assigned him, the records of the General Court have been copied, and the duplicates deposited in the Library of the Senate. And in this way,

without any extra Clerk for the purpose, duplicates of the Court records have been made from the earliest date down to April, 1777.

The orders for copying the records above recited, being of ancient date, it was believed that the Secretary would not have been justified in employing a person particularly and solely for that purpose. His immediate predecessors, he has learnt, had the same impressions. He begs, however, respectfully to suggest the expediency of having *duplicates* of the records *completed*; and that one set be deposited in chests or boxes, which might be easily and promptly removed in case of fire.

Some of the oldest volumes of records are found to contain addresses and letters prepared by the General Court or by the Governor and Assistants of those times. Latterly, all public letters have been recorded in separate volumes.

The records of the General Court are supposed to contain all the reports of Committees appointed by the Legislature, whether any law or resolve be passed thereon or not; and this seems to be necessary to constitute a perfect record. It has been found, however, upon enquiry, in some cases, that such reports have not been recorded, and were never sent to the Secretary's office. As it was formerly the practice, the Secretary would respectfully enquire, if it would not be expedient that all such reports be deposited in his office, for the purpose of being recorded and filed.

The Secretary has not had time to examine all the duplicate volumes of the General Court records. He has, however, compared several of them, and has observed some omissions in the most ancient, and some errors in the orthography.

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*A statement and schedule of the "public records and documents, belonging to the Commonwealth," in the Secretary's Office. April 17th, 1821.*

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For the year 1686, after June, and for 1687, 1688, and 1689, till the month of April, when the people assumed the powers of government, there are no records in the office of the Secretary; and the files for the same period are small and imperfect, and,

excepting some papers in admiralty cases, are composed chiefly of petitions for confirmation of tracts and lots of land, together with surveys thereof, many of which respect lands in the Colony of New York. And it is known that one act of injustice of that arbitrary administration, was to vacate the titles to a great portion of the lands which had been taken up by the people, and to declare them forfeited to the crown. It appears by a note in Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts, that the Records of that period were either destroyed or taken away, by order of Sir Edmund Andros. Some *minutes* of proceedings for a part of his administration, have been discovered by the undersigned, in examining the old files, and have been labelled, that they may be readily seen at any time.

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7th. The papers and documents belonging to the Secretary's Department have been so multiplied and increased within the last twenty years, that there is now no spare room in the office; and many files as well as pamphlets and bound volumes, are of necessity deposited in the upper story of the State House, to which it is very inconvenient, especially in winter, to have access. The Secretary is informed, that when the State House was built, it was intended, that the large room on the lower floor, adjoining the Secretary's Office, and now occupied by the Adjutant General, should be appropriated to that department. Some additional room will soon be necessary for keeping papers and files of the General Court, which are in the care of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Another room attached to the Secretary's Department is also wanted for engrossing bills during the sitting of the Legislature. For the engrossing Clerks should be free from interruption. And during the Session of the General Court, members are almost constantly calling at the Secretary's Office for books and copies, and for the purpose of searching the public records of former times. The room opposite the Treasurer's Office, which has many years been occupied as a land office, will probably soon be vacated. But that is so remote from the Secretary's present office, that it would not be so convenient as one at the west end of the State House. The room lately used by the Quarter Master General for an office has become

unoccupied; which, perhaps, would be considered a proper appendage to the Secretary's Department. It is for the undersigned, however, only to suggest the subject, and to refer to the wisdom of the Legislature to decide whether any new arrangement shall be made in relation to the Secretary's Office.

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9th. It may be proper to observe, that all the laws and resolves are copied for the printers, (who publish the laws) by the Clerks in the Secretary's office. This has been the practice for more than twelve years; formerly, the originals were sent to the printers, but on account of some accident, by which an original act was defaced and torn, it was concluded to send no more out of the office. This business requires some time, but the propriety of the measure, it is presumed, will not be doubted. A great portion of the laws and resolves are also copied by request, and for the use of particular persons and corporations. The making of indexes for each pamphlet of laws and resolves, and for the bound volumes, is also a business of considerable application and labour.

10th. It has been found necessary to have in the Secretary's office, lists of all towns in the Commonwealth, and of all public officers who are entitled to receive, at the expense of government, the laws of Congress, and any volumes or pamphlets printed by order of the Legislature. Books are kept by one of the Clerks for these purposes, to facilitate the discharge of this duty, and to prevent all mistakes in the delivery of the laws. Lists are also prepared in the Secretary's office of all the towns in the State, at every election of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senators or Members of Congress.

11th. *In the Council Chamber and Library Room adjoining, and Anti-Chamber, are the following volumes and documents, in addition to the records before mentioned, viz.:*

Files of Council Papers, from 1724, to this time, excepting for the years 1728 and 1729, and Journals or Minutes of Council Proceedings, from which the records are prepared for several years last past.

A set of General Laws of the State, of the special laws and

resolves in separate volumes; a set of Reports of Decisions in the Supreme Judicial Court, and several separate volumes of the same; a set of Laws of the United States, in duodecimo, and a set in four volumes royal octavo; a set of the Documents printed by order of Congress, for 1818, 1819 and 1820; a set of State Papers, in ten volumes, printed by order of Congress, in 1818; a volume of Massachusetts State Papers, for 1775-1776; Journals of Congress under the confederation, and of Senate and House of Representatives, since 1789, excepting for two years; Hazard's Collections of State Papers, two volumes.

Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts, in 2 vols. and a volume of his Collections of Antient Papers; a volume of Antient Laws of the American Plantations and Colonies, in 1640, &c.; Minot's History of Massachusetts, and of the Insurrection, in 1786; Marshall's History of Washington; Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*; Seybert's Statistical View of the United States; the Laws of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, and most of the other States in the Union; but they are not complete.

Proceedings of Convention in Virginia, 1775; Journal of Federal Convention in Philadelphia, in 1787; Chambers', Savary's and Johnson's Dictionaries; a Gazetteer and a Bible.

Three of Lewis' large Maps of the United States, purchased about three years ago; one is suspended in the Council Anti-Chamber, the other two were designed for the Senate and House of Representatives.

A Map of Europe, of Spain and Portugal, of New England, of New York, of Pennsylvania, of Maryland, of Connecticut; two of New Hampshire, and two of Maine; one of the land and waters about Sandwich and Buzzard's Bay, and one of the River St. Croix and Bay of Passamaquoddy.

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12th. The Secretary regrets, that, since the order of the Honorable House of Representatives requiring a statement of the records and documents in his department, which he has above partially attempted, he has had but little leisure from the usual and necessary duties of the office to bestow upon the subject, otherwise he would have given one more in detail.

This, so far as it pretends, he is confident is correct; and perhaps is as particular as was contemplated by the Honorable House of Representatives.

There is evidently a defect in some of the files of papers belonging to the General Court; and some of the old files are not in the precise order of time in which they should be arranged. This appears from the late partial examination, which the Secretary has been able to make, as well as from former search, occasionally, at the request of persons desirous of inspecting some old grants and surveys of land. The volumes of records he has inspected, personally, and with some attention and care; and is satisfied the statement, herewith presented, relating to them, is, in all respects, accurate. As to the files, they are so numerous, that it must be evident a minute and detailed examination could not be made without a much longer time than was allotted.

All which is respectfully submitted.

ALDEN BRADFORD,

*Secretary of the Commonwealth.*

On June 5, 1826, on motion of Mr. Bliss, a committee consisting of George Bliss of Springfield, David L. Child of Boston, Warren Lovering of Medway, Jonas Sibley of Sutton, and David Sears of Boston, was appointed to examine into the public records and documents in the Secretary's Office, and consider the expediency of taking measures for their orderly arrangement and preservation.

On June 10th, Mr. Bliss, for the joint committee, reported an order directing the Secretary to cause a list of the records and documents in his custody to be prepared and laid before the Legislature at their next session.

On January 5, 1827, a communication was received from the Secretary with a "Schedule of Acts, Records, Documents & Books in his Office, describing the subject of each, its date & place where it is found", which was referred to the above committee. It reads as follows:

## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, Jan<sup>y</sup> 4, 1827

In obedience to an Order of the Senate and House of Representatives, of the 20<sup>th</sup>, of June last, the Secretary of the Commonwealth has caused to be prepared, under his immediate inspection, by a gentleman of experience in such employments, a Schedule of "Acts, Records, Documents, and Books, in his Office, describing the subject of each, its date, and the place where it is to be found", as particularly as was thought necessary, or as time would allow. This Schedule<sup>4</sup> he has now the honor to submit.

In executing the duty assigned to him, the Secretary has endeavoured to fulfil the intentions of the Legislature, expressed in the Report of their Committee, and explained to him by the Committee themselves. It is manifest that a List of *all* the papers in the Office, with the title, date, and subject of *each*, would require many volumes to contain it, and a great length of time for its preparation. This, probably, was not expected, and, even if it was practicable, does not seem important to effect the objects of the examination as detailed in the Report. The Secretary understood that he was to exercise, in some degree, his own discretion, in forming the List, and to give such a view of the state of the Documents as would enable the Legislature to provide for their more exact arrangement in future, if their present condition should not be satisfactory. He has therefore enumerated the different files of Bills and Resolutions, and the papers accompanying them, with their date and place of deposit. The same course he has pursued with bundles of miscellaneous papers, stating particularly the subject matter of the files, and describing distinctly all *separate* Documents, Records, Plans, Books, &c. Where they were found misplaced they have been restored to their proper places, and papers of *similar* character heretofore deposited in *different* parts of the Office have been brought together. In the course of this arrangement the relative position of a considerable portion of the Documents has been changed. Altho' not expressly enjoined by the terms of the Order, this seemed

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<sup>4</sup>Now in the Massachusetts Archives.



necessary to form an accurate Catalogue, and will save trouble in any future arrangement. Many of the files have been also newly covered and superscribed.

It was understood from the Committee that it was a principal object to obtain a correct List, *by their titles*, of such of the Colonial and Provincial Laws as actually exist in the State Archives, there being no complete Copy of the Laws, either in print or manuscript, *previous to the adoption of the State Constitution*, and a large [?] proportion of the Original Acts having been lost or destroyed. This part of the Schedule has not been extended beyond the period referred to, (1780) not only because it would be swelled to an inconvenient size, but because a complete List of all Acts, since that period, already exists in the pamphlets containing the semi-annual publications of the Laws, which have been periodically distributed among the several Towns and Members of the Legislature; and nearly a perfect List, as far down as 1822, is found in the Revised Edition of the Statutes, prepared, with great labour, by Commissioners appointed for that purpose. It having been intimated, however, that this Edition did not contain as accurate a Catalogue of the Laws as it purported to do, the Secretary deemed it necessary that a careful and thorough comparison should be made of the Acts therein recited with those on file. This comparison, which necessarily occupied considerable time, shews that the Edition of 1822 does in fact embrace a true and complete List of all the Acts, excepting the Tax Acts (which have never been included in any edition) and *one* other Act, "concerning Theatrical Entertainments," passed March 27, 1793. It should be observed that the Acts are not arranged in those Volumes, exactly according to their dates, for reasons given by the Commissioners in their preface. It appears that *two* Acts are missing from file, altho' published in the Revised Edition. They are mentioned in the Schedule.

In preparing the Schedule of Acts previous to Nov. 28, 1780 (the date of the first Act under the Constitution), the Secretary caused each one to be unrolled, its title exactly copied, its date designated, and the originals placed in complete order. They were previously in imperfect order, and, in many instances, incorrectly marked on the outside. In this Schedule they have

been divided into two classes, *Public* and *Private Acts*, and, under these heads, are arranged by their titles according to their dates. It is obvious that a considerable number of the original Colonial and Provincial Acts are lost, particularly among those of early dates. Those which remain constitute a long Catalogue, and perhaps of an inconvenient size to be printed. Pains have been taken to condense it as much as possible; and for this reason, as well as for want of time, it was not thought proper to attempt a methodical arrangement of the Acts, according to their subject matter, but only according to their dates, under the general heads already mentioned. Should a digest of the kind suggested be deemed advisable, the List now submitted will furnish materials, without recurring to the originals. It may be further remarked, that, intermixed with the earlier Acts, were found many engrossed Bills which appear to have passed only a part of the stages necessary to their enactment, and not finally to have become laws;—these have been separated and placed by themselves. It would seem that they can be of no use, unless as objects of curiosity, or materials for history. There were also found, under date of 1687 '88, seven Original Acts of the Province of *New York*<sup>5</sup>, signed by *Thomas Dongan*, Governor of that Province, and which ought, perhaps, to be in the Archives of our sister State. Their present situation is probably to be accounted for by the fact that, very soon after their enactment, Massachusetts and New York were placed under the administration of the same Governor (*Sir Edmund Andros*) and the public papers of both governments coming into his hands, some of them were accidentally intermixed. These Acts do not appear to be of public importance.

Previous to 1775, the Acts of Incorporation of Counties and Towns were kept on files distinct from other Acts. Since that time they have not been kept separately, but are to be found on the *general files*, according to their dates. The Secretary did not think himself authorized to disturb this arrangement. He has, therefore, presented in another part of the Schedule the titles of these Acts previous to 1775, and, consequently,

<sup>5</sup>Returned to New York pursuant to Chap. 30, resolves of 1901, and destroyed in the fire at the capitol at Albany.

they are omitted in the General Catalogue. The Tax Acts, since Jan<sup>y</sup> 27, 1777 also form a *separate List*, because they have not hitherto been published either in the periodical pamphlets or the revised editions, and, since the date last mentioned, have been placed on distinct files, whereas, before that time, they were filed with the other Laws, and are therefore included in the same Schedule with them:—

The volumes containing the Records of the General Court have been numbered anew, and a Schedule of them is presented. The condition of the Records was fully explained in a Report of the Secretary, April 17, 1821. They have been again examined and their condition does not materially differ from the description then given of them. Two or three of the first Volumes are incomplete. Afterwards, with two exceptions, the series is regular. Volume No. 3 containing copies of papers from 1644 to 1654, is not a regular Record, but composed of transcripts of public documents. From 1686 to 1689, (the period of *Sir Edmund Andros's* Government) the Records, and most of the Files are missing, having, it is supposed, been taken away by that Governor's orders. From 1737 to 1743 there is an imperfect Record in *one* Volume only, (No 17) and that is evidently not an original; and for 1744 and 1745 there are no Records. Most of the papers and records from 1737 to 1745 inclusive were destroyed by fire, and the single Volume remaining seems to be composed of copies of some of the papers which escaped the conflagration. Duplicates of all the Records, from the earliest date to February 1777, are in the Lobby of the Senate Chamber, with the exceptions, that the few first pages of Volume No 1, containing a Schedule of property of the original Company, are not copied, and that there are no Copies of Volumes 3 and 17, which are not regular records, nor of Volumes 31, 32, 66 and 67, which contain Journals and Proceedings of the Provincial Congress in 1774 and 1775. Since 1777 there are no Duplicates, and, as was stated by the Secretary in 1821, the progress towards completing them must be slow, for the time of the Clerks is almost constantly employed in the ordinary business of the Office. Whenever there is an intermission it is improved for the purpose of continuing the Duplicates.

For want of room in the Secretary's Office, it has been necessary to occupy *three* upper Apartments in the State House with Books and Papers. Here have been deposited such papers as were of least importance, or not often referred to; and here, also, are kept most of the Laws, Reports, and other Books intended for distribution among the towns, members of the Legislature, and public officers. The Documents in these rooms were in disorder, and it is understood that many of them remained in the same state in which they were removed from the Old State House to the New, when this Building was first occupied. A portion of them is apparently worthless, and deposited in old trunks and boxes. It was not thought expedient to spend so much time as would be necessary to reduce them to order; but the Papers relating to the State Valuations, and a large part of the Rolls and Returns of the Old French Wars, and of the Revolutionary Army, were considered important enough to be methodically arranged; and this has, accordingly, been done, by collecting the loose papers into bundles, arranging them according to date, marking and numbering them, and including them in the Schedule.

Understanding from the Committee who reported the Order under which he acts, that it was desirable to have an Account of the printed Books and Pamphlets which are on hand, the Secretary has had them arranged and carefully enumerated, the exact number of each kind being named. It should be observed, however, that their number is fluctuating, as they are in a course of publication and distribution. Those of oldest date are now seldom called for, and generally lie useless, taking up much room to little purpose.—

The better to carry into effect the object of the Legislature in ascertaining precisely the location of the several Acts and Documents, all the Cases and Drawers in the Office have been numbered, and the numbers marked thereon. In the accompanying Schedule, the part of the Office, the number of the Case or Drawer, and the Shelf, where each Book, File, or distinct Paper may be found, are designated.

It is believed, that the Books and Documents are now in better order than they have usually been, yet there is no doubt that a careful inspection would shew that some papers are still

misplaced. This is the unavoidable consequence of the frequent examination of the files by individuals, and, particularly during the sessions of the Legislature, by Committees, Members, and others interested in the business of the Legislative Body. In this way papers are often deranged from their proper order, and it is impossible to prevent it, without a constant personal attention which cannot be spared from other official engagements. Into such a mass of papers as exists in this Department some confusion will creep in the lapse of years, which can only be rectified by an occasional examination.

The Secretary has given to this work, during its progress, as constant a superintendence and revision as his other duties permitted, and although he will not pledge himself that the Schedule herewith submitted has no errors, he is satisfied that it is substantially correct.

EDWARD D. BANGS,  
*Secretary.*

On January 20th, the committee reported it to be all that is necessary to answer the intentions of the legislature.

On March 10th, Mr. Child, for the committee, reported a resolve for the preservation and arrangement of the records and documents in the Secretary's Office, which was read and referred to the next General Court. It reads in part as follows:

Resolved, That His Excellency the Governor be & he hereby is authorized to appoint a suitable person, who together with the Secretary of the Commonwealth, shall cause to be provided as soon as may be practicable a fire-proof apartment; and shall cause such portion of the Records & Documents in the Office of said Secretary as they may deem necessary, to be removed & securely placed in s<sup>d</sup> apartment. And they shall also cause all the papers, pamphlets & books in said Office to be examined & sorted; and shall report to the next legislature, what new disposition ought in their opinion to be made of them or any of them, and they shall also cause to be formed by a learned & faithful person or persons, complete, & accurate Indexes to *all* the Records of the General Court & of the

Executive Council from the first organization of Governments in the Colonies of Plymouth & of Massachusetts Bay down to the time or times when the Clerks of the two Houses of the legislature, and the Secretary of the Commonwealth did or shall commence the making & continuing of such Indexes to said Records."

The joint committee's report under date of March 9, 1827, was reported in part as follows:

"That all the valuable records & papers of this Commonwealth are daily & hourly exposed to destruction by fire; & that in their opinion it is of the utmost importance that the same be removed as soon as may be practicable from their present exposed situations to an apartment, which shall be fire-proof.

The Committee find that considerable progress has been made under the direction of the Secretary during the late recess of the legislature in arranging & indexing the documents which are found in his Department. He has reduced them to classes & described their nature & situation in such a manner as greatly to facilitate reference to them. The Committee are of opinion that it is necessary to go still further, & to relieve the Secretary's department of much, which may be called useless lumber; & to put all that is useful & necessary in better order for reference. The proposed removal of the most precious records & documents to a secure place, will furnish a proper occasion for examining & sorting all the papers, pamphlets & books which exist in the office, & for completing the orderly disposition, & indexing of them, which the Secretary has commenced. There are many volumes of laws which by a resolve of the General Court belong to towns in the Commonwealth, & ought to be distributed both for the benefit of the towns, & for the disencumbering of the rooms of this edifice. Your committee are of opinion that a list of the towns which have not taken their volumes of the laws, & other books to which they may be entitled, should be published in the newspapers which publish the laws of the Commonwealth. There are probably other books, & papers which ought to be transferred to the library of the General Court, or disposed of in some other way in order that they may be useful, & the Department be

relieved of them: but until the examination & sorting shall be completed & the proposed removal effected, your committee do not deem it necessary to make any specific recommendations with respect to them.

One object more your Committee would present to the legislature as in their opinion of very great importance, viz. the immediate formation by a learned & faithful person of complete & accurate alphabetical Indexes of *all* the journals of the General Court & of the Executive Council from the first organization of Governments in the Colonies of Plymouth & of Massachusetts Bay down to the time when the clerks of the two Houses, & the Secretary of the Commonwealth did or shall commence the making & continuing of such indexes."

On June 12, 1828, it was referred to a joint committee consisting of David L. Child of Boston, Horace Mann of Dedham, John Lowell, Jr., of Boston, Francis C. Gray of Boston, and Joseph E. Sprague of Salem

"to consider whether any, & if any what further measures are necessary for the preservation of the Records & Documents in the office of the Secretary of State, or belonging to either branch of the legislature;—and for the systematic arrangement or other improvement in the form & disposition, of the same, so that the entire legislative records of the Government of Massachusetts, whether Colonial, Provincial or Independent, may be rendered most convenient & useful for reference, and report at the next session."

On February 16, 1829, the committee reported resolves which read as follows:

*Resolved.* That His Excellency the Governor with advice & consent of Council be and he hereby is authorized to appoint a Commissioner, whose duty it shall be to superintend the arrangement and labeling of the Files of the General Court from the foundation of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay to the present time, & to put the same into such state as may be most convenient for reference and best adapted for safe keeping.

*Resolved* That it shall be the duty of said Commissioner to superintend the comparing & correcting of the Duplicate

Journals of the General Court and to prepare or cause to be prepared accurate and complete Alphabetical Indexes and to take such other measures to render said Journals perfect, convenient for reference, & adapted for safe keeping which he shall deem expedient & proper."

It was deemed inexpedient to pass the same and a new draft was substituted and passed on February 25:

Resolved; That the Secretary of the Commonwealth be & he hereby is directed to take into his care & keeping all books & papers belonging to the Commonwealth not already under the care of some other Officer of the Government, excepting those belonging to the Executive or to one of the two Branches of the Legislature; and that he proceed to put the same, together with the papers now in his office not in that condition, into proper order & regular files & to make out a list of said files & of all the papers therein contained, as soon as may be consistently with the proper discharge of the other duties of his Office.

On March 10, 1831, the Governor and Council were authorized to cause a fireproof edifice to be erected on the northern front of the State House [that is, the back] which should contain a sufficient number of apartments, best calculated for the safe-keeping of the records and papers of the Commonwealth, in conformity to such plan as the Governor should think proper, etc.

This, the first addition to the Bulfinch State House, was constructed from plans of Isaiah Rogers in 1831 at a cost of \$6,919.33. It was 94 feet long, by 25 feet high, resting on a hammered stone foundation; the outside walls were of face brick; the arches had keystones, similar to the south front; the piers had belts and four rosettes of freestone; the caps and sills of the six windows were freestone; the roof was covered with copper, ornamented by a balustrade of wood, like the one over the portico on the south front; the four rooms for the safe-keeping of the records and papers



were vaulted with brick; the floor was vaulted and covered with flagging.

The Committee was so careful in its construction that no fireplaces were built, and finally it became necessary to petition the Legislature for relief from the cold and dampness. On March 5, 1833, the Secretary was authorized to take such measures as might be necessary for warming the fireproof edifice recently erected on the northerly front of the State House, which contains the Public Archives.

In the meantime, on March 24, 1832, the Secretary was directed to examine the public documents preserved in the several departments and to select and remove to the fireproof edifice such of said documents as it might be deemed expedient to deposit there, etc.

As noted above, the Secretary was instructed to take into his care and keeping all books and papers not in the care of some other officer or the Executive and the General Court, and later to remove all public documents to the fireproof edifice as might be deemed expedient. According to the report of Secretary Bangs, January 9, 1833, he had a thorough examination made of all documents in the State House, save the Adjutant General's. The papers deemed most important were arranged under the personal direction of the Secretary, including the files of the House of Representatives, the Governor and Council, and of the Secretary's office. The files in the Treasurer's office were arranged under the latter's direction. The removal of some of these papers and the examination and removal of the Adjutant General's papers were deferred until Spring. It is interesting to note that "a small portion of papers in the Secretary's Department, intended for removal, still remain untransferred, for want of room in the apartment designed for the accommodation of that Office . . ." and that "the consequent exposure to cold [being without heat] must prove prejudicial to the health and comfort, not only of the public officers and their clerks, but of the Mem-

bers of the Legislature, who will often have occasion to search for documents themselves.”

Gov. Edward Everett, in his inaugural address of 1836, recommended that:

“The archives of our ancient Commonwealth preserved in this building, are richly deserving of the care of the legislature. They are replete with the most precious materials, as yet but partially explored, for the history of the Country. They contain documents of the highest interest and value, which have never been printed. Considerable labor has from time to time, been bestowed in arranging them and good progress made in preparing an index. But it is respectfully submitted, whether means ought not to be provided to secure them against those risks of destruction, to which all papers existing in a single copy are exposed: to arrange them in systematic order, so as to admit of their being easily consulted; and perhaps for the printing of a selection of the most curious and important. It is believed that the people of the Commonwealth would not regret to see a small appropriation made for the purpose of throwing new light on the extraordinary events of our early history, and the characters of the great and good men who adorn its pages.”

This was followed by a petition from the Massachusetts Historical Society:

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled.—

The undersigned petitioners, a committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society, respectfully represent, that our society was incorporated in 1794, and since that period it has been actively engaged in collecting ancient books and manuscripts relating to the Antiquities and History of America, and particularly of Massachusetts. The result of their labours is the collection of an extensive and valuable library and arranging it so as to be of great public benefit, and the publication of twenty-four volumes of Collections of valuable papers and documents.

Among other documents of great value, which have engaged the attention of our association, the ancient papers, in the

archives of the State House of this Commonwealth, have been considered among the most valuable; And had the Society been able, without too great labour, to obtain access to them, and had it been at liberty to have used them freely, they would, it may be presumed, have enriched their Collections with many of peculiar interest and value. But the state in which these papers are, is such, that it is extremely difficult and irksome to examine them. Individuals, it is true, have looked over a few files and journals, but it has been at great expense of time and labour. The ancient files are tied up in bundles, frequently without regard to chronological order, or to the subjects of which they treat. If reduced to order, they would be highly beneficial to the public; many of them would be so, particularly, to the state and to individuals, in establishing public and private rights, and in illustrating the history and character of the founders of our state and the progress of society in this region, from the beginning to the present prosperous state of the country. The attention and labour, which the desired arrangement of these ancient documents would require, cannot be bestowed in the Secretary's Office consistently with due regard to the current duties of the Secretary, under the existing establishment. A laudable degree of attention, indeed, has been bestowed by the gentlemen, who have so worthily sustained that office, but some direct and efficient provision is requisite for the entire arrangement of those valuable remains. It was gratifying to find this subject recommended to the attention of the Legislature by his Excellency the Governor in his Speech at the commencement of the present session of the Legislature; and your petitioners would respectfully pray, that you would take such measures as would secure the following results.

First. To have all the papers in the Secretary's Office arranged chronologically, or in some other regular systematic, and approved plan, adapted to convenient reference.

Second. When thus arranged to have them bound in volumes of convenient size, each volume to have an index to the papers it contains.

Third. To print a selection of the most valuable and important of these papers.

And as in duty bound will ever pray.

Boston February 19. 1836.

Tho <sup>s</sup> . L. Winthrop	Committee in
J Davis	behalf of the
Lemuel Shattuck.	Massachusetts Historical Society.

The Committee to whom the above portion of the Governor's address was referred, reported a resolve appropriating one thousand dollars to be expended by the Secretary of the Commonwealth under the direction of the Governor in providing for the preservation and security of the papers and documents in the Archives of the Commonwealth, which was signed by the Governor, March 11, 1836. This resulted in the appointment of Rev. Joseph B. Felt and the arrangement of the Archives as we know them today.

No adequate list of the material in the Archives exists. The Statement and Schedule of the public records and documents, belonging to the Commonwealth, in the Secretary's Office, 1821; the Schedule of the documents in the Secretary's Office, 1827; the Schedule of the documents in the fireproof room No. 2, belonging to the Council and the Secretary's Office, 1833; the Statement of books, manuscripts, and documents relating to the public archives, 1839; the Report of the Commissioners upon the condition of the records, files, papers and documents in the Secretary's Department, 1885, and the Report on the public archives of Massachusetts made by Andrew McFarland Davis, 1900, give some idea of it, however. The following may give further light on the subject:

LEGISLATIVE PAPERS: 200,000 papers relating more or less to legislation, 1625 to 1780, (Archives proper) and at least 1,000,000 papers, 1780 to date;

MAPS AND PLANS: 5,000 maps and plans, 1630 to date, including the official town series of 1794 and 1830, many of which are unique;

GENERAL COURT RECORDS, 1628 to date, including Court Records, 1628 to 1686; printed House Journals, 1730 to 1779 (the only perfect file covering that period in existence); Executive and Legislative Records of the Council, 1692 to 1780; engrossed Acts from 1692 to date; House and Senate Journals, 1780 to date; Council Records and Files, 1780 to date;

CHARTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS, 1628 and 1691, with the explanatory Charter of 1726 and the Exemplification vacating that of 1628;

CONSTITUTIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS and the proceedings and papers of the various Constitutional and other Conventions of 1779-1780, 1788, 1814, 1820, 1853 and 1917-1919;

MILITARY RECORDS of the Pequot, King Philip's, French and Indian, and Revolutionary Wars and Shays's Rebellion;

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS, such as the

Acts (printed), 1775-1780;

Andros Land Warrants, 1687-1688;

Board of War Journals, etc., 1776-1785, 1814, 1815;

Book of Eastern Claims, 1674-1720;

Boundary Lines, papers, etc., 1642 to date;

Charters, Commissions and Proclamations, 1628 to date;

Civil Commissions, 1775 to date;

Census Returns of Massachusetts and the United States, 1830 onward;

Eastern Lands, deeds, papers, etc., 1780-1859;

Election Returns, Qualifications, Expenses, etc., 1788 to date;

French Documents and Maps relating to Massachusetts, collected in France by Ben Perley Poore;

Insolvency Returns, 1846 to date;

Kennebec Purchase, Submission of settlers;

Land Agents' Accounts;

Letters (in), 1790-1820;

Letters (out), 1701-1833;  
Lobby Act Returns, 1891-1920;  
Log Books;  
Medical Examiners' Returns, 1885-1920;  
Naturalization Records, 1885 to 1920;  
Nominations of Governor and Council, 1807-1920;  
Orderly Books, originals and copies;  
Pardon Records and Files, 1757 to date;  
Passport Records, 1833-1869;  
Pension Records, 1786-1836;  
Plymouth Colony Records, Court, Deeds and  
Probate (copy);  
Probate Records, Supreme Court of, 1761-1784;  
Resolves (printed), 1776-1837;  
Sainsbury Papers (copies made in England for  
editor of Province Laws);  
Soldiers' Families, aid to, 1777-1781;  
Valuations, towns and cities, 1780-1907;  
Vital Records of 151 towns and cities to 1850,  
copies from which the printed records were made;  
Waldo Claim, Submission of settlers;  
and an endless variety of papers deposited pursuant  
to law in the Secretary's office.

The Archives proper consist of 242 volumes of manuscripts relating to Massachusetts affairs from 1625 to 1791, arranged by Mr. Felt under 76 topical headings, in what Palfrey calls "chaotic disorder"; 3 volumes of Hutchinson papers, 1625-1771, returned by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1873; 1 volume of papers culled from the maps and plans by Dr. Edward Strong; and 81 volumes of miscellaneous papers arranged on the Felt scheme by Mr. James J. Tracy. Each volume of the Felt collection has a rough chronological index. These indices were consolidated into a calendar index by Samuel M. Barton in 1878. The Tracy collection is arranged chronologically, but is not indexed. A modern index of subjects, places and names of these collections is now under way. The start was made

with volumes 112-118, inclusive, relating to towns, and the result has been very satisfactory.

While Dr. Edward Strong was in charge, he compiled several topical indices, such as Eastern Indians, Western Indians, slaves, captives, shipping and piracy, manufacture and trade, physic and surgery, wills and inventories, names, bonds, proclamations and other printed papers, Baptists, Quakers, witches, Indian names of towns, localities, and the like. I have a summary of the calendar index, 1625 to 1776, and of the executive records of the Council from 1692 to 1750, prepared by me for the late Frederick Lewis Gay, which is of great assistance to me personally and to earnest students as well. From this I find, for instance, that from 1629 to 1776, inclusive, there are at least 648 papers relating directly to Boston, 37 to Brookline, 91 to Dedham, 253 to Harvard College, 325 to Marblehead and 96 to pirates.

The main groups in the Felt collection are agriculture, colonial, commercial, depositions, domestic relations, ecclesiastical, emigrants, estates, foreign relations, French neutrals, Hutchinson, Indian, inter-charter, journals, judicial, lands, laws, legislature, letters, literary, manufactures, maritime, military, council minutes, muster rolls, pecuniary, petitions, political, Revolution, 1689, Revolution, 1775-1783 (96 volumes), Shays's rebellion, speeches and messages, taverns, towns, trade, travelling, treasury, usurpation, valuation, and witchcraft.

The Tracy collection contains some seventeenth century material, but is mostly of the middle province period, arranged as accounts, 1676-1783; board of war orders, 1777-1781; bonds, deeds, wills, etc., 1657-1798; certificates of service and supplies, 1705-1798; constitutional convention, 1779-1780; constitutional convention, 1788; council papers, 1732-1799; judicial, 1671-1798; legislative, 1660-1799; letters, 1663-1780; loyalists, 1776-1791; maritime, 1697-1795; miscellaneous, 1703-1799; orders, 1703-1799; petitions, 1659-1786;

receipts, 1697-1799; returns, 1711-1799; Shays's rebellion, 1785-1790; treasury, 1753-1797; valuation and taxes, 1738-1799.

Some idea of the variety of the manuscripts in the Archives proper may be obtained from the following selections.

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ORDER FOR PRINTING "UNITY OUR DUTY," 1645

Whereas by a good providence of God there is come unto o<sup>r</sup> hands a book lately printed in England Intituled Unitie our Dutie<sup>6</sup> It being principallie applyed & presented to the Godly Reuerend & Learned brethren of the Presbyterian Judgm<sup>t</sup>, & the dissentinge Godlie Reuerend & Learned brethren comonly called Independant contending together about Church Govern<sup>t</sup> tending earnestlie to diswade them from bitter speaking & writing on against another. It being a subiect in the generall applicable to most Christian Churches & states & not vnsuteble to o<sup>r</sup> present condition It being also a work penned w<sup>th</sup> much wisdom & authoritie & power & guided by a spirit of meekenes & profitable to all that will make vse of it. This Court being very willing to further the peace & vnities of The people heere amongst vs & to prevent all occasions tending to the breach thereof & finding this short treatise speaking throughlie & fullie to the point & may be y<sup>e</sup> meanes of blessing to us in God behalfe hath thought it meete to cause the said booke to be printed & sent abroad into all y<sup>e</sup> ptes of o<sup>r</sup> Jurisdiction & whereby all may take notic of Gods will revealed in that Pticular.

The Magistrates desire the Concurrence of the Deputys in passing this order, & that this Order ps<sup>ntd</sup> be prefixed to the Booke.

JO: WINTHOP: D: GO:

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<sup>6</sup>Unity our Duty: in twelve considerations humbly presented the godly, reverend, and learned brethren of the Presbyterian judgement; and the dissenting, godly, reverend, and learned brethren, commonly called Independent: contending together about Church Government, which tends earnestly to disswade them from bitter speaking and writing one against another. By I. P. London, Printed for John Hancock, 1645.



The house of Dep.<sup>ts</sup> doe concurr w.<sup>th</sup> o<sup>r</sup> hono<sup>red</sup> mag.<sup>sts</sup> in the passinge of this bill, & doe further desire them to make choyce of one or more of o<sup>r</sup> Reuend Elders whoe are desired to drawe vpp an Epistle in comenda<sup>õ</sup>on of ye worke w<sup>ch</sup> we desire may bee likewise printed & prefixt to y<sup>e</sup> booke.

ROB: BRIDGES

Voted. consented heerevnto.

Jo: WINTHOP. D: Go:

o<sup>r</sup> Reuerend Elders are desired to choose out some one amongst themselves who may answere the desires & expectatio of the Court

INCREASE NOWELL Secret

Jo WINT

*Massachusetts Archives, LVIII., 1*

### ROGER WILLIAMS'S BANISHMENT

(1) THE "GREAT CENSURE", 1639

SALEM. 1<sup>d</sup>.5<sup>m</sup>.39<sup>y</sup>.

Reuerend and deerly beloued in the lord. wee thought it our bounden duty to acquaynt you with the names of such persons as haue had the great censure past vpon them in this our church, with the reasons therof.

Beseeching you in the lord not only to reade their names in publike to yours, but also to giue vs the like notic of any dealt with in like manner by you, that so wee may walke towards them accordingly; for some of vs here have had communion ignorantly with such as haue bin cast out of other churches.

2 Thes: 3. 14.. wee can doe no lesse then haue such noted as disobey the truth.

Roger Williams & his wife.  
John Throckmorton & his wife.  
Thomas Olney and his wife.  
Stukely Westcot and his wife.  
Mary Halliman.  
Widdow Reeues.

These wholly refused to heare the church denying it, and all the churches in the Bay to bee true churches—and (excepting two) are all rebaptized

John Elford for obstinacy after diuers syns hee stood guilty of, and proued by witnes.

William James for pride, and diuers other euills, in which hee remayned obstinate.

John Talby for much pride, and vnnaturalnes to his wife, who was lately executed for murdring her child.

William Walcot for refusing to bring his child to the ordinance, neglecting willingly family—duty&c.

Thus wishing the Continued enjoyment of both the Slaues (Beauty and Bonds) and that your soules may flourish as water<sup>d</sup> gardens, rest

Y<sup>rs</sup> in the lord Jesus

Hu: Peter

by the churches order

and in her name.

(Backed) for the Church of X<sup>t</sup> in [Dorches]ter

*Massachusetts Archives, CCXL., 33*

(2) TEMPORARY SUSPENSION, 1656

The Magistrates hauinge perused the Letters<sup>7</sup> of M<sup>r</sup> Williams, doe thinke meete that some time be appointed to Consider of the contents thereof and that M<sup>r</sup> Williams may haue libertie to Come hither to attend this busines & that a Comittee be chosen to heare all parties & to prepare the matter & report the same to y<sup>e</sup> Gen<sup>ll</sup> Court and this to be done fourthw<sup>th</sup>, M<sup>r</sup> Willms attending not farr off, for an answer, and the Indians wayting in towne The magis<sup>s</sup> haue past this w<sup>th</sup> reference to y<sup>e</sup> Consent of their brethren the depu<sup>t</sup>s heereto.

EDW: RAWSON Secre<sup>tv</sup>

15. May 1656.

The Deputyes Consent hereto & haue Chosen Major Hathorne Capt. Edw: Johnson & Capt. Lusher to be of this Comittee to Joyne w<sup>th</sup> some of o<sup>r</sup> hon<sup>rd</sup> magistrates which we desire may be Chosen to act herein with all Convenient speed

W<sup>m</sup> TORREY Cleric.

M<sup>r</sup> Bradstreet is Appointed to Joyne in this Comittee:

EDW: RAWSON Secre<sup>tv</sup>

*Massachusetts Archives, xxx., 62*

<sup>7</sup>Not found in the Archives.

(3) **CONDITIONAL SUSPENSION, 1676**

Whereas M<sup>r</sup> Roger Williams stands at present under a sentence of Restraint from coming into this colony yet considering how readily & freely at all tymes he hath served the English Interest in this time of warre w<sup>th</sup> the Indians & manifested his particular respects to the Authority of this colony in several services desired of him, & further understanding how by the last assault of the Indians upon Providence his House is burned & himself in his old age reduced to an uncomfortable & dissetled state Out of compassion to him in this condition The Councill doe order & Declare that if the Sayd M<sup>r</sup> Williams shall see cause & desire it he shall haue liberty to repayre into any of o<sup>r</sup> Towns for his security & comfortable abode during these Publick Troubles He behaving himself peaceably & inoffensively & not disseminating & venting any of his different opinions in matters of religion to the dissatisfaction of any

past by y<sup>e</sup> Council the 31<sup>th</sup> of March

1676

E R S

*Massachusetts Archives, x., 233***A HANGMAN'S PETITION FOR INCREASE OF WAGES, 1670**

To the honored generall Courte now Sitinge In Boston  
Peace bee Multiplied to you by our lord Jesus Christ

The humbell petition of your poore seruant John Laurence sheweth, that where as it pleased, the honored county courte in boston to make choise of mee the last Januarie in the yeare sixty & Nine to bee the executioner in boston, the spirits of men are such in these latter times that for the greatest p<sup>t</sup> of them, it is a place of greate scorne and contempt. [though] it [is] a monge those of honest minds a place lawfull and warrantable. I beeing a verie p<sup>o</sup>ore man by reason of former lamnes with extreame paines of the gowte for a greate space of time though lately it hath pleased the lord through his mercy of late to giue mee som strength to labor, & my humbell petition to yo<sup>r</sup> honors is that my wages might bee Inlarged somewhat more, what youre pleasure is for I finde that fifteen pounds a yeare in the cuntrie pay is insoeficient for to maine taine mee & my family for I

haue uerie littel employment heare in the Towne manie that formerly Did Imploye mee will not now by reason of the place that I am now In, thus leaueing my request with the lord and with you I Rest yo<sup>r</sup> poore Seruant

JOHN LAURENCE

The Deputys Judge meete, that the pet<sup>r</sup> apply himselfe to the County Court of Boston, who are hereby empored to Act herein as they shall se Cause o<sup>r</sup> Hono<sup>rd</sup> magists Consenting hereto

WILLIAM TORREY Cleric.

Boston, 14, 8, 70

Consented to by y<sup>e</sup> magis<sup>t</sup>s.

EDW: RAWSON Secre<sup>ty</sup>

*Massachusetts Archives*, xxxix., 392

PETITION FOR DECEASED OFFICIAL'S SALARY, 1673

To the honn<sup>ble</sup>: The Gouvernour the Deputy Gou<sup>r</sup> And other the Magistrates & Deputyes now: Assembled in the Generall Court held at Boston this fourteenth Day of May 1673

Wee whose names are vnder written: being Exettu<sup>rs</sup> of the last will and Testament of M<sup>rs</sup> Mary Lusher the Relict of the honn<sup>d</sup> Major: Lusher Deceased. haueing Demanded: the said Majors sallerry of the treasurer: wee supposing to haue receaued the same for a whole yeare: vnderstanding the Custome in such Casses wee humbly Conceauue that a Magistrate being Chosen and sworne: his sallerry is Allowed for the yeare: But the hon<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Russell Declares hee Cannot Doe it without the Consent of this honn<sup>d</sup> Court: Wee Therefore thought it our Duty to Intreat this honn<sup>d</sup> Court to giue order for the paym<sup>t</sup> thereof or your Resolu<sup>co</sup>n heerin which will oblige your humble seruants

JOHN STARR

DANIELL FISHER

In answer to this pet.

The Deputyes Doe not Judge meet that the Treasurer pay for any longer time then while the Pson liued vnto

whom It was Due with refference to the Consent of o<sup>r</sup>  
Hono:<sup>rd</sup> magists hereto

WILLIAM TORREY Cleric.

14 (3) 1673

*Massachusetts Archives*, XLVIII., 121

DRAFT EVADER'S PETITION IN KING PHILIP'S WAR

To the Hono:<sup>ble</sup> Gov:<sup>r</sup> and Councill

Siting in Boston—

The Petition of Nathaniell Byfield

Humbly sheweth that yo<sup>r</sup> Petitiono<sup>r</sup> is a stranger in the  
Country: and Lately marryed and is now Prest to goe out to  
Warr against the Indians: And where as the Law of God is  
plaine: in 24 Dewter: 5: That when a man hath taken a  
new wife: he shall not goe out to warr neither shall he be  
charged with any business but he shall be free at home one  
yeare

Yo<sup>r</sup> Petitiono<sup>r</sup> doth humbly request the favour of yo<sup>r</sup> Hono<sup>r</sup>s  
to grant him the Privildge and benefit of the Said Law: and to  
grant him a discharge from this present Service,

So Shall he pray for yo<sup>r</sup> Hono<sup>r</sup>s &c

NATHANAEL BYFIELD

*Massachusetts Archives*, LXVIII., 231a

MURDER OF TWO INDIAN SAGAMORES, PRISONERS OF WAR, BY  
THE WOMEN OF MARBLEHEAD, 1677

July 17, 1677.

Robe<sup>t</sup> Roules of marblehead marriner Aged 30 yeares or  
thereabouts belonging to the Catch the W<sup>m</sup>. & Sarah of Salem  
saith y<sup>t</sup> Joseph Boovey Going out master of hir in a ffishing  
voyage. hauing Caught & being aboue half loaden w<sup>th</sup> ffish  
riding at an anchor at port LaTour nere Cape Sable on the  
Easterly side—on the 7<sup>th</sup> of this Instant July being Saturday  
purposing & taking wood & water on y<sup>e</sup> second day following  
Intending to Goe on in their fishing designe but on the Lords  
day being the eighth Instant in the da<sup>ing</sup> of the day Came on  
board them on Cannoo of Indians as nere as he Cann Guesse

nine or tenn w<sup>th</sup> their Armes ready fixt loaded & Cockt y<sup>r</sup> deponent first espying off them dropt doune to saue himself from y<sup>e</sup> shott w<sup>ch</sup> the Indian lett fly & fell against the winlase & so did no hurt the deponent Called to them what you kill English men He Ans<sup>d</sup> if English men shoot wee kill, if not wee no kill & bid vs come vp & Going vp they bound him & the other 4 English marrine<sup>s</sup> w<sup>th</sup> lins, y<sup>e</sup> master being on: one after another stripping them of all their cloathes only left them a gresy shirt wescoat & drawers y<sup>ey</sup> vsed to fish in w<sup>th</sup> their stockings & shooes wch were in their Cabbin: giving vs liberty to sitt vpon deck bound as they were till about two of the clock in the Afternoone & then loosened them & Comanded them to sayle towards Penobscot wch they endeavo<sup>r</sup>ing to doe y<sup>e</sup> winde shortning they Came to an Ancho<sup>r</sup> lying there till the second day in wch time they told vs they Intended to kill us & all the English men aboard the fiue Catches being 26 men & boyes except three on y<sup>e</sup> 2d day they Comanded vs & the other Catches to sett saile together for Penobscott the Indians being in all the Catches Disperst about seventy or eighty. wee espying a barcque Gaue hir chase & tooke hir wch was m<sup>r</sup> Wats vessell wee haling hir & he telling vs he was from Boston on a fishing voyage wee having to p<sup>r</sup>vent murder advised the Indians to lye close tho cockt & y<sup>e</sup> English would deliuer accordingly Came vp w<sup>th</sup> sd watts told him y<sup>t</sup> he & his vessell was taken at w<sup>ch</sup> they laught but telling him & his Crew if they did not strike Imediate by lord they wer all dead men. on w<sup>ch</sup> they lored & yeilded on w<sup>ch</sup> the Indians all to four<sup>e</sup> went & boarded them hauing Divided the English men & mixt them sending ou<sup>r</sup> master Bouey & one more of their Comp<sup>a</sup> aboard another Catch & left y<sup>e</sup> deponent as m<sup>r</sup> of sajd Catch they wholly dislikeing the sajd Bovey & another old man aboard to be m<sup>r</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> deponent desired & being w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> sajd watts as they sent two of theirs away so they tooke two of wats men whereof one was w<sup>m</sup> Buswell & presently after they Came on board espying a saile wee were Comanded to saile for them wch wee did till it grew dusky & then y<sup>e</sup> Indian Sagamore on board Com<sup>d</sup>ed them to beare vp y<sup>e</sup> helme but y<sup>e</sup> deponent being at the helme refused to beare vp at w<sup>ch</sup> the old sagamore grew Angry whervpon w<sup>m</sup> Buswell tooke him by the throat

ttript vp his heeles & kneeld on him stopt his mou<sup>th</sup> w<sup>th</sup> his hatt & kept him doune with his knee & Richard Douning striving wth another Indian getting him doune endeavoring to thrō him ouerboard the Indians legs being entangled about sajd Buswell he sd Buswell took his legg & he<sup>l</sup>pt to throw him ouerboard & spying y<sup>e</sup> other Sagamore in y<sup>e</sup> Cookrome in the foreCatle they called to some of their Company to shut the scutle doune on him & keepe him fast w<sup>ch</sup> they did in the meane time the Company layd hold of another Indian & threw him ouerboard, & then tooke & bound the two Sagamores the old & young & so made all y<sup>e</sup> Sajle y<sup>e</sup>y Could & steered away east south east abt 36 leagues or 40 & so Came thro mercy Came safe to marble head on the 15<sup>th</sup> day alitle before sun doune where Coming to an ankor a rumo<sup>r</sup> being Giun out y<sup>t</sup> wee were killed, many people Came to y<sup>e</sup> waterside & haling vs & coming on board vs askt vs why wee kept the Indians alieue & had not killd them they Ansr<sup>d</sup> they had lost all their cloaths & hoped by y<sup>s</sup> meanes to Gett somew<sup>t</sup> towards there losses by these Indians, but y<sup>e</sup> people seemed Angry but they told them they would Carry them on shoure to y<sup>e</sup> Constable to secure them y<sup>t</sup> so they might be carried to ye Court at Boston & came on shoare w<sup>th</sup> them bound w<sup>th</sup> their hands behind them: but being on shoare the whole Toune flocking about them: especially y<sup>e</sup> weomen lajd hold on y<sup>e</sup> Indians haire: at w<sup>ch</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Indians laught but y<sup>e</sup> weomen by thrusting of y<sup>e</sup> deponents & throing stones at them Gott the Indians into their hands & w<sup>th</sup> stones & billets & w<sup>t</sup> els they know not they made an end of y<sup>e</sup> Indians w<sup>ch</sup> they saw not till they saw them lye dead & all their heads bones & flesht pulld & they further say, that the tumultuation was such by y<sup>e</sup> weomen y<sup>t</sup> for their liues they Could not ac<sup>t</sup>tain or tell any pticular woman it was so Geñll. y<sup>e</sup> weomen Crying out if they had bin Carried to Boston they would haue liued but if there had binn forty of the best Indians in y<sup>e</sup> Cuntry there they would kill them all though they were hangd for it neither Constable M<sup>r</sup> Mauricke nor any suffered to Come nere them. taken vpon oath this 17th of July 1677::

EDW<sup>d</sup> RAWSON Secrety.

*Massachusetts Archives, LXIX., 158*

## PORTUGUESE WHALER'S PETITION FOR A PATENT

To his Excellency S<sup>r</sup> Edmond Andros Kn<sup>t</sup> Cap<sup>in</sup> Generall and Governour in cheife of his Maj<sup>ties</sup> Territory and Dominion of New England

The humble Petition of Jacobus Loper,  
Humbly sheweth

That the Petition<sup>r</sup> for the Space of Twenty Two yeares and upwards hath practized Catching, Killing and Trying of whales for Oyle, and finding of Late Small benefit accruing to him by the same for that he hath mett with many abuses in the attending on sd Employ.

That the Petition<sup>r</sup> by his Long Experience hath tryed many Inventions and devices relateing to the premisses, and being minded to goe on said Designe againe and to use his Endeavours for promoteing makeing of Oyle by a new Invention or Inventions of the Petition<sup>r</sup>s which heis not willing to disclose or discover to any, Therefore humbly prayes your Excellency will be pleased to grant him a Patent for the Space of Twelve yeares next after the date hereof, for the Ketching and Killing of all Sorts of Such Oyle ffish as has not ever been Killed by any whale men in this Country, and that he may have a Birth to kill whales in or any other Oyle ffish and trying the Same up, on any part North of A West Line from Pamet River in Cape Cod, and not be hindred or molested by any person or persons upon any sort of Oyle ffish in that bounds, and Especially that all persons within any Part of this Government may be prohibited from makeing use of the Petitioners new Invention or Inventions for the takeing any Sort of Oyle ffish in S.d. time

And yo<sup>r</sup> Petition<sup>r</sup> as in duty bound shall ever pray &c

*Massachusetts Archives, CXXVIII., 136a.*

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 QUARANTINE AGAINST THE DEAD, 1691

Whereas since the abatement of the Small Pocks in Boston, many persons are returned to Town out of the Country, whether they had withdrawn themselvs for fear of the Contagion: And whereas Complaint is made, that the Bodies of



Persons dying of the Small Pocks at Rumney Marsh, are carried through the Town to the South-Burying Places, to the Offence and hazard of many of the Inhabitants, who have not had the Distemper

This Court doth therefore Order, That all Persons dying at Rumney-Marsh & parts adjacent, of the small Pox, their Bodies shall be buried in some convenient Place on that side of the Water, and none of them shall be brought over to Boston under the Penalty of Five pounds in Money to y<sup>e</sup> Use of the Poor in Boston, to be recovered by any one ore more of the Select-Men, of the Heirs Executors, Administrators, Parents, or Masters of the deceased; Any Usage to ye Contrary Not withstanding.

February, 11.<sup>th</sup> 169<sup>o</sup><sub>7</sub> Past in the Affirmative by the Governour & Assistants

SAM SEWALL P ord<sup>r</sup>

Consented to by y<sup>e</sup> Deputies:

DUDLEY BRADSTREET P ord<sup>r</sup>

*Massachusetts Archives, xxxvi., 387*

PETITION BY THE WIFE OF CAPTAIN KIDD, 1699

To his Excellency the Earle of Bellomont, Cap.<sup>tn</sup> Gen. & Gov<sup>r</sup> in Chief of his Maj:<sup>ties</sup> provinces of the Massachusetts Bay New Yorke &c:<sup>a</sup> in America, and of the Territoryes thereon depending & vice Admiral of the same.

The petition of Sarah Kidd the wife of Cap.<sup>tn</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Kidd Humbly shew:<sup>th</sup>

That on the sixth day of July Ins:<sup>t</sup> some of the Magistrates and officers of this place, came into your Pet<sup>rs</sup> lodgings at the house of Duncan Campbell, & did there seize and take out of her Trunck a silver Tankard, a silver Mugg, silver Porringer, spoons—foreks & other pieces of Plate, and Two hundred and sixty pieces of Eight, yo<sup>r</sup> Pet<sup>rs</sup> Sole: and proper Plate & mony brought with her from New Yorke, whereof she has had the possession for several years last past, as she can truely make

oath; out of w<sup>ch</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Trunck was also took Twenty five English Crowns w<sup>ch</sup> belonged to yo<sup>r</sup> Pet<sup>rs</sup> Maid.

The premisses and most deplorable Condition of yo<sup>r</sup> Pet<sup>r</sup> considered—she humbly intreats yo<sup>r</sup> hon<sup>rs</sup> Justice, That Returne be made of the said Plate & mony.

SARAH SK KIDD

18.<sup>th</sup> July (99).

In Council. July. 18. 1699.

Advised That m<sup>rs</sup> Kidd makeing Oath That She brought the Plate and money abovementioned from New yorke with her. It be restored unto her. As also That Cap<sup>ne</sup> Kidd and Company<sup>s</sup> wearing Apparel under Seizure be return<sup>d</sup> to them.

*Massachusetts Archives, LXII., 316*

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A MASSACHUSETTS MANUMISSION, 1705

To all People unto whom these presents shall come Dorothy Grecian of Boston in the County of suffolk in New England Widow Relict of Thomas Grecian late of Boston Mariner Deced sendeth Greeting Knowye That I the said Dorothy Grecian for and in Consideration of the good & faithfull service done and performed for me by my Negro Woman servant named Betty and for divers other good Causes and Considerations me hereunto moving I the said Dorothy Grecian Have and by these presents for my self my Executo<sup>rs</sup> admi<sup>rs</sup> and Assigns Do fully ffreely & absolutely Discharge Manumitt and sett ffree my said Negroservant Betty of and from my service so that neither I my heirs Executo<sup>rs</sup> or admi<sup>rs</sup> nor any other Person or Persons for me them or any of them shall or may at any time hereafter ask claim or demand any Service of the said Negro woman Betty by any manner of ways or means whatsoev<sup>r</sup>. But from all or any farther Duty or Service the said Negro Woman Betty is and for ever hereafter shall be absolutely freed and Discharged by these presents

Inwitness whereof I have hereunto sett my hand and Seal

the Fourth day of January Anno Doñ: one Thousand seven hundred and four 1704—

Doreto D groson [Seal]  
her mark

Signed sealed & Deliv<sup>rd</sup>  
in prsence of us

Robert Butcher  
hamah Wheeler

Suff: ss. Robert Butcher & Hannah Wheeler Personally appearing made Oath that they did see Dorothy Grecian signe seale & deliver this Instrument as her voluntary act & deed and that they set their hands as Witnesses thereto  
Boston July. 5. <sup>o</sup> 1705 [Jurat] Cor E lyde J P

*Massachusetts Archives, IX., 154*

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ATTEMPT TO COMMUNICATE SMALLPOX BY LETTERS, 1752

By the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Spencer Phipps Esq<sup>r</sup>., Lieutenant Governor & Commander in Chief of His Majesties Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England;

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS I have received Information, that divers Attempts have been made, by some Evil minded Person or Persons, to Communicate the small Pox to the Family of Benjamin Lynde Esq<sup>r</sup>., one of his Majestys Council for this Province, by Letters, containing the Corrupt and Infectious Matter of the said Distemper, sent to the House of the said Benjamin Lynde, Esq<sup>r</sup> in Salem, & by other ways and means, devised by such evil minded Person or Persons, for the Purpose afores<sup>d</sup> & a Reward of five hundred Pounds old Tenor has been Publickly Offered by the said Benjamin Lynde Esq<sup>r</sup>., to any Person or Persons, who shall discover the Author or Contriver of such Wicked, Attempts or any Person Concerned therein, so as that they may be Convict thereof; And Whereas it is of Great Importance to his Majestys Subjects, that all Persons guilty of such gross and heinous Offences should be brought to Justice, & Suffer Condign Punishment;

I have therefore thought fit, with the Advice of his Majestys Council, to issue this Proclamation, Requiring all Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Grand Jurors, Constables & all other Officers, whom it may Concern; & also Recommending it to all other His Majestys Subjects, within this Province, to use their utmost Endeavours for discovering and bringing to Justice the Person or Persons concerned in the Wicked Attempts aforesaid: And I do Likewise Promise that if any one of the Accomplices in said Attempt shall discover the rest so as that they or any of them may be Convict of the Offence aforesaid such Person making such Discovery shall Receive His Majestys Gracious Pardon

Given under my hand at Concord this 28<sup>th</sup> day of May 1752, In the Twenty fifth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second of Great Britain France & Ireland King Defender of the Faith &c

S PHIPS

By Command of His Honour the  
Lieutenant Governor with y<sup>e</sup>  
Advice of the Council.

J WILLARD Sec̄ry

GOD SAVE THE KING

*Massachusetts Archives, LXXXVII., 299*

OVERTURES FOR THE HAND OF  
GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON'S DAUGHTER, 1771

LETTER FROM FITZWILLIAM

SIR

The various methods there are of writing on the following subject, makes me rather at a loss which to take, as I am a stranger to you,—but as the nature of it requires plain dealing, I shall take the liberty to consider you as a friend, and write to you as such:—

You will prehaps Sir think it rather strange, and be much surpris'd at the receipt of this letter; particularly as I am going to ask a great favor;—no less Sir than the honor of an alliance to your family;—I have had the honor of seeing miss

Hutchinson, but never in my life spoke to her—I need not tell you I admire her, when I say I wish to call her mine;—on seeing her the first time, I determin'd to endeavour to cultivate her acquaintance, but have not been so happy as to succeed;—therefore I should wish as the most honorable method of proceeding, to get acquainted with her through the means of her Father; and I should be happy in obtaining your permission Sir to visit her:—

I would more on the occasion, but yet not near so much as what I could say to you in person;—therefore Sir if you'll favor me with a line, directed to me at Mr Perkins near the old Brick meeting House, I will do myself the honor of waiting on you, any time you'll appoint.

You will find me act, from beginning to end, as a man of honor, and I am very certain that you, on your part, will do the same:

I have the honor to remain with the utmost esteem and respect

Sir

Your very obedient and  
most hble Serv<sup>t</sup>  
W<sup>m</sup> FITZWILLIAM

April y<sup>e</sup> 6.<sup>th</sup>  
1771

(Backed) To His Excellency  
Thomas Hutchinson Esq<sup>t</sup>

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GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON'S REPLY, 1771

BOSTON 6-Ap-1771

S<sup>r</sup>

I am not insensible that such an Alliance as you have proposed would be doing the greatest honour to me & my Family. I am at the same time very sensible that it cannot be approved of by the Noble Family to which you belong—In my station, from<sup>t</sup> Respect to My Lord FitzWilliam I should think it my duty to do all in my power to discourage one of his Sons from so unequal a match with any person in the Province and

I should most certainly be highly criminal if I should countenance & encourage a match with my own daughter

I hope Sir you will think this a sufficient reason for my not acceding to your proposal & sincerely wish you happy in a person more suitable to your birth & rank & who may be approved of by your Honorable Parent

I have the honor to be

S<sup>r</sup> Y<sup>r</sup> most obed<sup>t</sup>

humble Ser—

THOMAS HUTCHINSON

*Massachusetts Archives, xxv., 474*

PETITION FOR A DELAYED COPYRIGHT, 1770

Province  
of y<sup>e</sup> Mass<sup>tts</sup> Bay }  
}

To his Excellency—

Thomas Hutchinson Esq: Cap<sup>t</sup> Gen: &c the Honorable his Majesty's Council & y<sup>e</sup> hon<sup>ble</sup> House of Representatives of said Province in Gen: Court assembled.—

May y<sup>e</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1772—

The Memorial of Will<sup>m</sup> Billings, &c.—

Whereas your Memorialist in the Year 1770 prefer'd his Petition to this Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court, therein praying for the Reasons therein mention'd, that he might have a Patent granted him for the sole Liberty of printing a Book, by him compos'd, consisting of Psalm Tunes, Anthems & Canons, which has been found upon Experience, to be to general Acceptance; & which Composition is made much Use of in many of our Churches, & is more & more us'd every Day.

That your Memorialist has compos'd a 2<sup>d</sup> Vol: in Addition, to make his Performance more compleat, tho' he is not insensible, that further Additions may be made.—He would also inform this Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court that he is apprehensive that an unfair Advantage is about to be taken against him, & that others are endeavoring to reap the Fruits of his great Labor & Cost.—

That this hon<sup>bl</sup>: Court so far countenanc'd & sustain'd his Petition, as to commit the same, & that your Committee reported in favor of your Petitioner; but it being suggested by a worthy Member of this Hon<sup>ble</sup>: Court, that they should be certain that your Petitioner was the real Author of the Book, whereupon the Consideration thereof was refer'd to the next Session. In answer to which your Memorialist avers that he is the sole Author; & should have been ashamed, to have expos'd himself, by publishing any Tunes, Anthems, or Canons, compos'd by Another; however fully to satisfy this hon<sup>ble</sup>: Court, your Memorialist stands very ready to be examin'd by any Committee, or the whole General Assembly, if they think proper; Tho' he doubts not, that at this Time of Day there are sundry Members of this hon<sup>ble</sup>: Court, upon that Head fully satisfy'd; but so it is may it please your Excellency & Honors, that your Memorialist's former Petition is (as he is inform'd) either lost or misplac'd; he therefore prays that the same may be revived, & that he may, by the Indulgence of this Hon<sup>bl</sup>: Court, be favor'd with the alone Privilege, of printing his own Composition for a number of Years, as to this Hon<sup>ble</sup>: Court shall seem meet, & your Memorialist, as in Duty Bound, shall ever pray.—

W<sup>m</sup> BILLINGS.

*Massachusetts Archives*, LVIII., 598

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ABIGAIL ADAMS RECOMMENDS A MAJOR'S COMMISSION

BRAINTREE May 13 1775

SIR

A Brother of Mr Adamses who has been a Captain of a Company in this Town, is desirous of joining the Army provided he can obtain Birth: he would prefer a Majors to any other—as he has not an acquaintance with any Gentleman in the Army, except Coll Palmer, he requested me to write you a line, in his behalf; he is a person both of Steadiness & Probity—and if there should be any place open in the army wherein he could serve his Country, I believe he would discharge the Trust re-

posed in him to acceptance— Your Intrest Sir in his favour,  
would oblige [him] & his absent Brother, as well as your

Humble Servant

ABIGAIL ADAMS

(Backed) To Doctor Joseph Warren, Watertown.

*Massachusetts Archives*, CXCIII., 184

GENERAL WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENLISTING  
EASTERN INDIANS

NEW YORK July the 11. 1776

GENT<sup>N</sup>

At a crisis like the present, when our Enemies are prosecuting a War with unexampled severity—when they have called upon foreign mercenaries and have incited Slaves and Savages to arms against us, a regard to our own security & happiness calls upon us to adopt every possible expedient to avert the blow & prevent the meditated ruin.

Impressed with this Sentiment, and impelled by necessity, the Congress have been pleased to empower me, as you will perceive by the Inclosed copy of their Resolve, which I have the honor of transmitting you, to call to our aid so many of the St John's, Nova Scotia and Penobscott Indians, as I might Judge necessary; At the same time they have desired that I should request the assistance of your Hon<sup>ble</sup> body in carrying their views into execution, and to assure you that whatever expences you may necessarily Incur in doing It, and as Incident to It, they will reimburse.

Esteeming their service of much importance, particularly If the Enemy should attempt an Impression into the Interior parts of the Country, I must entreat your kind Offices upon this occasion, and your friendly exertions immediately to engage on the best terms you can, Five or Six hundred Men of these Tribes, and have them marched with all possible expedition to Join the Army here.



Having professed a strong inclination to take part with us in the present contest, It is probable they may be engaged for less pay & on better Terms than the Continental Troops, but If they can not, they must be allowed It. The Term of their Inlistment should be for Two or three years unless sooner discharged, (the right of which should be reserved us) If they will engage for so long a time—If not, for such time as they will agree to, provided It is not too short: and It must be part of the Treaty, & enjoined upon 'em, to bring every man his Firelock If It can be possibly effected. As the Services they may render will probably depend on their early & timely arrival, It is unnecessary to suggest to you the necessity of the utmost dispatch in the matter.

I well know the Execution of the work will be attended with some trouble & Inconvenience, but a consideration of the benefits that may arise from employing them, and your zeal for the common cause, I am persuaded will surmount every Obstacle and apologize for my requisition, especially as It comes recommended & supported by authority of Congress.

I have the Honor to be

with sentiments

of Great respect

Gent<sup>l</sup>

Yr Most Obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

G<sup>o</sup> WASHINGTON

PS.

Since I had the honor of addressing you on the 9<sup>th</sup> Inst. I have received a Resolve from Congress for calling the other Two Continen<sup>l</sup>. Regim<sup>ts</sup> from the Massachusetts Bay to Join the Army here. A Copy of which I have Inclosed and by the advice of my General Officers have wrote Gen<sup>l</sup> Ward to detach 'em immediately—the accounts we have all agreeing that Lord Howe is every day expected with 150 Transports with at least 15,000 Troops, in addition to those already here.

*Massachusetts Archives, cxcv., 86*

## THE HUTCHINSON MANUSCRIPTS

WOODSTOCK Nov<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>th</sup>, 1776.

SIR,

I hope I shall not be thought chargeable with Neglect of the Trust reposed in me, first by, what was then called, the provincial Congress, and afterwards by the General Court, altho' I am not, at present, possessed of any of the Letters, or other Papers, of the late Governor Hutchinson; and, consequently, am unable to comply with the Order of the Honorable House of the 4<sup>th</sup> Instant, forwarded to me by Jonathan Metcalf. Esq.

When I came to this Town, to visit my Family, whom, at their irresistible Importunity, I consented should remove hither, it was not my Determination to remain so long in this unsettled Situation; but Providence so ordered it that the bodily Disorders which forbad my taking a Seat in the House of Representatives last Year, increased upon me to that Degree that I ventured abroad but very little during the greatest Part of the following Winter.

Before I came to this Place I committed all the Books and Papers with which I had been entrusted to the Care of the reverend William Gordon, of Roxbury; whom their Honors of the House well know to be a Gentleman trustworthy and patriotic. He still has them in keeping, and I purposed they should remain with him till my Return to Dedham, with my Family, which I had made Preparation for, and should, with Submission to Providence, have effected some Time in this Month, had I not been prevented by the Prevalency of the Small Pox, which I judged myself an unfit Subject for, under my present Complaints.

My Expectation is that I shall return soon; but in the mean Time M<sup>r</sup> Gordon will chearfully obey the Direction of the Honorable House, if applied to, by their order, for any Papers that may be wanted. I have not, at this Distance of Time, a perfect Recollection of my seeing among them Letters from Col<sup>o</sup> Israel Williams to M<sup>r</sup> Hutchinson; altho' I am inclined to think I did. One from the latter to the former I well remember to have seen, in one of the Books, wherein he mentions "the

Dedham Councillor" as writing "Nonsense" in the Evening Post, (so he was pleased to call it,) with a View to confute the Reasoning in his long Speech of January 1773. Whether he was right in his Conjecture or not, he knew I detested his Principles of Government. Alas that I ever should have been so much mistaken as to entertain, tho' so long before that Period, and but for a Short Time, a favorable Opinion of a Man whom all America are bound to execrate!

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

SAMUEL DEXTER

To

The Clerk of the Honorable House  
of Representatives,  
Massachusetts Bay

Under Cover to  
Jon<sup>a</sup> Metcalf Esq.

*Massachusetts Archives, cxcv., 365*

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