

PETITION

General Court of the Colony of Connecticut

to Charles II (1630–1685), King of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1649–1685)

7 June 1661

The humble petition of the General Court at Hartford upon Connecticut in New England, to the high and mighty Prince Charles II, humbly shows that your petitioners have not had for many years past, since their possession and inhabiting these western and inland parts of this wilderness, any opportunity (by reason of the calamities of the late sad times) to look for and obtain such grant by letters patents from Your Excellent Majesty, the Sovereign Lord and King, as might assure them of such liberties and privileges and sufficient power as might encourage them to go on through all difficulties, hazards, and expences in so great a work of plantation, in a place so remote from the Christian world, and a desert so difficultly subdued, and no way improvable for subsistence, but by great cost and hard labour with much patience and cares.

And whereas besides the great charge that has been expended by our fathers, and some of their associates yet surviving, about the purchase, building, fortifying, and other matters of culturing and improving to a condition of safety and subsistence in the places of our present abode among the heathen, whereby there is a considerable and a real addition to the honour and enlargements of His Majesty's dominion by the sole disbursements of His Majesty's subjects here of their own proper estates.

They have laid out a very great sum for the purchasing a jurisdiction right of Mr. George Fenwick, which they were given to understand was derived from true royal authority by letters patents to certain lords and gentlemen therein nominated; a copy whereof was produced before the commissioners of the colonies and approved by them, as appears by their records, a copy whereof is ready to be presented at Your Majesty's command; either by fire, at an house, where it had been sometimes kept, or some other accident is now lost, with which your poor subjects were rather willing to have contented themselves within those afflicting times, than to look for power or privileges from any than their lawful prince and sovereign.

May it therefore please Your most gracious and excellent Majesty to confer upon your humble petitioners (who unanimously do implore Your Highness' favour and grace therein) those liberties, rights, authorities, and privileges which were granted by the aforementioned letters patent to certain lords and gentlemen, so purchased as aforesaid, or which were enjoyed from those letters patent granted to the Massachusetts Plantation by our fathers, and some of us yet surviving when there, in our beginnings inhabiting.

And upon which those large encouragements, liberties, and privileges so great a transplantation from our dear England was undertaken (and supposed to be yet our inheritance till the running of that western line, the bounded limits of those letters patent did since our removal thence determine our lot to be fallen without the limits of that so bounded authority.)

May it please Your Majesty graciously to bestow upon your humble suppliants such royal munificence according to the tenor of a draft or instrument, which is ready here to be tendered at your gracious order.

And whereas besides those many other great disbursements as aforesaid in prosecution of this wilderness work, your poor petitioners were forced to maintain a war against one nation of the heathens that did much interrupt the beginnings of your servants, by many bloody and hostile acts whereby divers of our dear countrymen were treacherously destroyed, and have also been ever since, and are still at much charge in keeping such a correspondence of peace and amity with the divers sorts of the heathen nations that are round about your plantations, thus far extended into the bowels of the country, besides the maintenance of all public charges for church and civil affairs, which are very great, in respect of our great poverty.

May it please Your Most Excellent Majesty out of your princely bounty to grant our immunity from customs as may encourage the merchants to supply our necessities, in such commodities as may be wanting here, for which we have neither silver nor gold to pay, but the supply in that kind may enable in due time to search the bowels of the earth for some good minerals, whereof there seem to be fair probabilities, or produce some such other staple commodities as may in future time operate to be good effects of Your Majesty's goodness and bounty.

If your poor colony may find this gracious acceptance with Your Majesty as to grant their humble desires, whereby they may be encouraged to go on carefully and strenuously in their plantation business in hope of a comfortable settlement for themselves and their posterity, that under your royal protection they may prosper in this desert, they shall, as is their acknowledged duty, ever pray for your great tranquility and perpetual happiness, and humbly craving leave, they subscribe themselves, Your Majesty's loyal subjects and servants.

R.R. Hinman, *Letters from the English Kings and Queens Charles II, James II, William and Mary, Anne, George II, etc. to the Governors of the Colony of Connecticut, Together with the Answers Thereto, From 1635 to 1749...* (Hartford: John B. Eldredge, 1836):37-40.