

*Charter granted to the Colony of Connecticut, by King Charles II. in the Fourteenth Year of his Reign.*

*Undecima pars Patentium Anno Regni Regis CAROLI Secundi Quartodécimo.*

**C**HARLES the Second, by the grace of God, &c. to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Whereas by the several navigations, discoveries, and successful plantations of divers of our loving subjects of this our realm of England, several lands, islands, places, colonies and plantations, have been ordained and settled in that part of the continent of America called New-England, and thereby the trade and commerce there hath been informed by the humble petition of our trusty and well-beloved John Wintrop, John Mason, Samuel Willis, Henry Clarke, Matthew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gould, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woolcot, John Talcott, Daniel Clerke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obadiah Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Hawkins, John Deming, and Matthew Camfield, being persons principally interested in our colony or plantation of Connecticut in New-England, that the same colony, or the greatest part thereof, was purchased and obtained for great and valuable considerations, and some other part thereof gained by conquest, and with much difficulty, and at the only endeavours, expence and charge of them and their associates, and those under whom they claim, subdued and improved, and thereby become a considerable enlargement and addition of our dominions and interest there: now know ye, that in consideration thereof, and in regard the said colony is remote from other the English plantations in the places aforesaid, and to the end the affairs and business, which shall from time to time happen or arise concerning the same, may be duly ordered and managed, we have thought fit, at the humble petition of the persons aforesaid, and are graciously pleased to create and make them a body polittick and incorporate, with the powers and privileges herein after mentioned; and accordingly our will and pleasure is, and our especial

Incorporation of the governor and company of Connecticut.

especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, we have ordained, constituted and declared, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do ordain, constitute and declare, that they the said John Wintrop, John Mason, Samuel Willis, Henry Clerke, Matthew Allen, John Tappan, Nathan Gould, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Wollcott, John Talcott, Daniel Clerke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obadiah Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Hawkins, John Deming, and Matthew Camfield, and all such others, as now are, or hereafter shall be, admitted and made free of the company and society of our colony of Connecticut, in America, shall, from time to time, and for ever hereafter, be one body corporate and politick, in fact and name, by the name of Governor and Company of the English colony of Connecticut, in New-England, in America; and that by the same name they, and their successors, shall and may have perpetual succession, and shall and may be persons able and capable in the law, to plead and be impleaded, to answer and to be answered unto, to defend and be defended, in all and singular suits, causes, quarrels, matters, actions, and things, of what kind or nature soever; and also, to have, take, possess, acquire, and purchase lands, tenements, or hereditaments, or any goods or chattels, and the same to lease, grant, demise, alien, bargain, sell, and dispose of, as our other liege people of this our realm of England, or any other corporation or body politick within the same, may lawfully do. And further, That the said Common governor and company, and their successors, shall and may, for ever hereafter, have a common seal to serve and use for all causes, matters, things, and affairs whatsoever, of them and their successors, and the same seal to alter, change, break, and make new, from time to time, at their wills and pleasures, as they shall think fit. And further, we will and ordain, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do declare and appoint, That, for the better ordering and managing of the affairs and business of the said company, and their successors, there shall be one governor, one deputy governor, and twelve assistants, to be, from time to time, constituted, elected, and chosen, out of the freemen of the said company, for the time being, in such manner and form as hereafter, in these presents, is expressed; which said officers shall apply themselves to take care for the best disposing and ordering of the general business and affairs of and concerning the lands and hereditaments herein after-mentioned to be granted,

Name of the  
corporation.

Govern-  
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A governor,  
deputy go-  
vernor, and  
twelve assis-  
tants, to be  
chosen out  
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men of the  
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ed, and the plantation thereof, and the government of the people thereof. And for the better execution of our royal pleasure herein, we do, for us, our heirs and successors, assign, name, constitute, and appoint the aforesaid John Winthrop to be the first and present governor of the said company, and the said John Mason to be the deputy governor, and the said Samuel Willis, Matthew Allen, Nathan Gould, Henry Clarke, Richard Treat, John Odgden, Thomas Tappen, John Talcott, Thomas Wells, Henry Wollcott, Richard Lord and Daniel Clerke, to be the twelve present assistants of the said company, to continue in the said several offices respectively until the second Thursday, which shall be in the General at-month of October, now next coming. And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do ordain and grant, That the governor of the said company, for the time being, or, in his absence, by occasion of sickness, or otherwise, by his leave or permission, the deputy governor, for the time being, shall and may, from time to time, upon all occasions, give order for the assembling of the said company, and calling them together, to consult and advise of the business and affairs of the said company; and that, for ever hereafter, twice in every year, that is to say, on every second Thursday in October, and on every second Thursday in May, or oftener, in case it shall be requisite, the assistants and freemen of the said company, or such of them, not exceeding two persons from each place, town, or city, who shall be, from time to time, thereunto elected or deputed by the major part of the freemen of the respective towns, cities, and places for which they shall be so elected or deputed, shall have a general meeting or assembly, then and there to consult and advise in and about the affairs and business of the said company; and that the governor, or in his absence the deputy governor, of the said company, for the time being, and such of the assistants and freemen of the said company as shall be so elected or deputed, and be present at such meeting or assembly, or the greatest number of them, whereof the governor, or deputy governor; and six of the assistants, at least, to be seven, shall be called the general assembly, and shall have full power and authority to alter and change their days and times of meeting, or general assemblies, for electing the governor, deputy governor, and assistants, or other officers, or any other courts, assemblies, or meetings, and to chuse, nominate, and appoint such, and so many other persons as they shall think fit, and shall be willing to

Two assemblies shall be held in every year, in May and October.

One or two members to be chosen by every town.

Power of the general assembly.

accept

accept the same, to be free of the said company and body political, and them into the same to admit, and to elect and constitute such officers as they shall think fit and requisite for the ordering, managing, and disposing of the affairs of the said governor and company, and their successors. And we do hereby, for us, our heirs and successors, establish and ordain, That once in the year, for ever hereafter, namely, the said second Thursday in May, the governor, deputy governor, and assistants of the said company, and other officers of the said company, or such of them as the said general assembly shall think fit, shall be, in the said general court and assembly, to be held from that day or time, newly chosen for the year ensuing, by such greater part of the said company, for the time being, then and there present. And if the governor, deputy governor, and assistants, by these presents appointed, or such as hereafter be newly chosen into their rooms, or any of them, or any other officers to be appointed for the said company, shall die, or be removed from his or their several offices or places before the said general day of election, (whom we do hereby declare, for any misdeemeanor or default, to be removeable by the governor, assistants, and company, or such greater part of them, in any of the said public courts to be assembled, as is aforesaid) that then, and in every such case, it shall and may be lawful to and for the governor, deputy governor, and assistants, and company aforesaid, or such greater part of them to be assembled, as is aforesaid in any of their assemblies, to proceed to a new election of one or more of their company, in the room or place, rooms or places, of such governor, deputy governor, assistant, or other officer or officers so dying, or removed, according to their discretions. And immediately upon, and after such election, or elections, made of such governor, deputy governor, assistant, or assistants, or any other officer of the said company, in manner and form aforesaid, the authority, office, and power before given to the former governor, deputy governor, or other officer and offices so removed, in whose stead and place new shall be will and pleasure is, That as well such as are by these chosen, shall, as to him and them, and every of them respectively, cease and determine. Provided also, and our presents appointed to be the present governor, deputy governor, and assistants of the said company, as those that shall succeed them, and all other officers to be appointed and chosen as aforesaid, shall, before they undertake the execution of their said offices and places respectively, take their se-

The Governor, deputy governor, and assistants, and all other officers of the company shall be chosen every year by the general assembly in the month of May.

Accidental vacancies in any of these offices may be supplied by the general assembly at any other meeting of it.

Power to remove the governor, or any other officer of the company, for any misdeemeanor.

Oaths of office to be taken by the governor, and all other officers.

veral and respective corporal oaths, for the due and faithful performance of their duties in the several offices and places, before such person or persons as are, by these presents, hereafter appointed to take and receive the same; that is to say, The said John Wintrop, who is herein before nominated and appointed the present governor of the said company, shall take the said oath before one or more of the masters of our court of chancery, for the time being; unto which master of chancery we do, by these presents, give full power and authority to administer the said oath to the said John Wintrop accordingly: and the said John Mason, who is herein before nominated and appointed the present deputy governor of the said company, shall take the said oath before the said John Wintrop, or any two of the assistants of the said company; unto whom we do, by these presents, give full power and authority to administer the said oath to the said John Mason accordingly; and the said Samuel Willis, Henry Clerke, Matthew Allen, John Tappen, Nathaniel Gould, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woolcot, John Talcott, Daniel Clerke, John Ogden, and Thomas Wells, who are herein before nominated and appointed the present assistants of the said company, shall take the oath before the said John Wintrop, and John Mason, or one of them; to whom we do hereby give full power and authority to administer the same accordingly. And our further will and pleasure is, That all and every governor, or deputy governor, to be elected and chosen, by virtue of these presents, shall take the said oath before two or more of the assistants of the said company, for the time being; unto whom we do, by these presents, give full power and authority to give and administer the said oath accordingly. And the said assistants, and every of them, and all or every other officer or officers to be hereafter chosen, from time to time, to take the said oath before the governor, or deputy governor, for the time being; unto which said governor, we do, by these presents, give full power and authority to administer the same accordingly. And further, of our more ample grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, we have given and granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and of our successors, do give and grant unto the said governor and company of the English colony of Connecticut, in New-England, in America, and to every inhabitant there, and from England to every person and persons trading thither, and to every such person and persons as are or shall be free of the said colony,

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colony,

colony, full power and authority, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, to take, ship, transport, and carry away, for and towards the plantation and defence of the said colony, such of our loving subjects and strangers as shall, or will, willingly accompany them, in and to their said colony and plantation, except such person or persons as are or shall be therein restrained by us, our heirs and successors; and also to ship and transport all, and all manner of goods, chattels, merchandizes, and other things whatsoever, that are or shall be useful or necessary for the inhabitants of the said colony, and may lawfully be transported thither; nevertheless not to be discharged of payment to us, our heirs and successors, of the duties, customs and subsidies, which are or ought to be paid or payable for the same. And further, our will and pleasure is, and we do, for us, our heirs and successors, ordain, declare, and grant unto the said governor and company, and their successors, that all and every the subjects of us, our heirs or successors, which shall go to inhabit within the said colony, and every of their children which shall happen to be born there, or on the sea, in going thither, or returning from thence, shall have and enjoy all liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects within any of the dominions of us, our heirs or successors, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever, as if they, and every of them, were born within the realm of England. And we do authorize and empower Oaths of allegiance the governor or in his absence the deputy governor for the time being, to appoint two or more of the said assistants, at any of their courts or assemblies to be held as aforesaid, to have power and authority to administer the oath of supremacy and obedience to all and every person and persons, which shall at any time or times hereafter go or pass into the said colony of Connecticut; unto which said assistants so to be appointed as aforesaid, we do by these presents give full power and authority to administer the said oath accordingly. And we further, of our especial grace, Power to certain knowledge, and mere motion, give and grant unto rect courts the said governor and company of the English colony of Connecticut in New-England in America, and their successors, determining of justice for civil suits, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the governor, or deputy governor, and such of the assistants of the said company for the time being, as shall be assembled in any of the general courts aforesaid, or in any courts to be especially summoned or assembled for that purpose, or the greater part of

General do-  
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Connecticut

Oaths of al-  
legiance and  
supremacy.

Power to e-  
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civil suits,

of them, whereof the governor, or deputy governor, and six of the assistants, to be always seven, to erect and make such judicatories for the hearing and determining of all actions, causes, matters and things happening within the said colony or plantation, and which shall be in dispute and depending there, as they shall think fit and convenient; and also, from time to time, to make, ordain and establish all manner of wholesome and reasonable laws, statutes, ordinances, directions and instructions, not contrary to the laws of this realm of England, as well for settling the forms and ceremonies of government and magistracy, fit and necessary for the said colony, and the inhabitants there, as for naming and styling all sorts of officers, both superior and inferior, which they shall find needful for the government and plantation of the said colony, and the distinguishing and setting forth of the several duties, powers and limits of every such office and place, and the forms of such oaths, not being contrary to the laws and statutes of this our realm of England, to be administered for the execution of the said several offices and places; as also for the disposing and ordering of the election of such of the said officers as are to be annually chosen, and of such others as shall succeed, in case of death or removal, and administering the said oath to the new-elected officers, and granting necessary commissions, and for imposition of lawful fines, mulcts, imprisonments, or other punishments, upon offenders and delinquents, according to the course of other corporations within this our kingdom of England; and the same laws, fines, mulcts and executions, to alter, change, revoke, annul, release or pardon, under their common seal, as by the said general assembly, or the major part of them, shall be thought fit; and for the directing, ruling and disposing of all other matters and things, whereby our said people, inhabitants there, may be so religiously, peaceably and civilly governed, as their good life, and orderly conversation, may win and invite the natives of the country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Saviour of mankind, and the Christian Faith; which in our royal intentions, and the adventurers free profession, is the only and principal end of this plantation; willing, commanding and requiring, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, ordaining and appointing, that all such laws, statutes and ordinances, infractions, impositions and directions, as shall be so made by the governor, deputy governor and assistants, as aforesaid, and

And to make laws, and ordinances not contrary to the laws of England.

Reference to other corporations within the kingdom of England.

The said laws shall be published in writing published

published

published in writing under their common seal, shall carefully under their common seal, and duly be observed, kept, performed, and put in execution, according to the true intent, and meaning of the same; and these our letters patents, or the duplicate or exemplification thereof, shall be, to all and every such officers, superiors and inferiors, from time to time, for the putting of the same orders, laws, statutes, ordinances, instructions and directions, in due execution, against us, our heirs and successors a sufficient warrant and discharge. And we do further, for us, our The gov. of heirs and successors, give and grant unto the said governor said company and company, and their successors, by these presents, that any shall it shall and may be lawful to and for the chief commanders, to assemble have power to assemble governors and officers of the said company for the time and array, being, who shall be resident in the parts of New-England and arm the inhabitants hereafter mentioned, and others inhabiting there, by their of the colony leave, admittance, appointment or direction, from time to ny, and conduct them to safety, to assemble, marshal, array, and put in war against any enemies posture, the inhabitants of the said colony, and to commit that shall in-fonate, empower and authorize such person or persons as vade them; they shall think fit, to lead and conduct the said inhabitants, as well by sea as by land, and also to kill, slay and destroy, by all fitting ways, enterprizes and means whatsoever, all and every such person or persons as shall, at any time hereafter attempt or enterprize the destruction, invasion, detriment or annoyance of the said inhabitants and plantation, and to use and exercise the law martial in such cases only as occasion shall require, and to take or surprize, by all ways and means whatsoever, all and every such person or persons, with their ships, armour, ammunition, and other goods, of such as shall, in such hostile manner, invade or attempt the defeating of the said plantation, or the hurt of the said company and inhabitants, and, upon just causes, to and likewise invade and destroy the natives or other enemies of the said just causes to colony. Nevertheless our will and pleasure is, and we do invade and hereby declare unto all christian kings, princes and states, destroy their that if any persons, which shall hereafter be of the said company or plantation, or any other, by appointment of the said Proviso in governor and company, for the time being, shall at any time case they shall rob or times hereafter rob or spoil, by sea or by land, and do injure any any hurt, violence, or unlawful hostility, to any of the prince or subjects of us, our heirs or successors, or any of the subjects state, in a mity with of England.



of any prince or state, being then in league with us, our heirs or successors, upon complaint of such injury done to any such prince or state, or their subjects, we, our heirs and successors, will make open proclamation within any parts of our realm of England, fit for that purpose, that the person or persons committing any such robbery or spoil shall, within the time limited by such proclamation, make full restitution or satisfaction of all such injuries done or committed; so as the said prince or others so complaining may be fully satisfied and contented: And if the said person or persons, who shall commit any such robbery or spoil, shall not make satisfaction accordingly, within such time so to be limited, that then it shall and may be lawful for us, our heirs and successors, to put such person or persons out of our allegiance and protection; and that it shall and may be lawful and free for all princes and others to prosecute with hostilities such offenders, and every of them, their and every of their procurers, aiders, abettors, and counsellors in that behalf. Provided also, and our exprefs will and pleasure is, and we do, by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, ordain and appoint, that these presents shall not, in any manner, hinder any of our loving subjects whatsoever to use and exercise the trade of fishing, upon the coast of New-England in America; but they, and every or any of them, shall have full and free power and liberty to continue and use the said trade of fishing upon the said coast, in any of the seas thereunto adjoining, or any arms of the seas, or salt-water rivers, where they have been accustomed to fish; and to build and set upon the waste lands belonging to the said colony of Connecticut, such warfs, stages, and work-houses, as shall be necessary for the salting, drying, and keeping of their fish, to be taken or gotten upon that coast; any thing in these presents contained to the contrary notwithstanding. And Grant of the foil of the colony to the said gov. and company.

Reservation to the King's subjects residing in other parts of his dominions of a liberty of fishing and drying their fish within the said colony.

Grant of the foil of the colony to the said gov. and company.

## THE COLONY OF CONNECTICUT.

Massachusetts colony running from East to West, (that is to say) from the said Narragansett Bay, on the East, to the South Sea; on the West part, with the islands thereunto adjoining, together with all the firm lands, soils, grounds, havens, ports, rivers, waters, fishings, mines, minerals, precious stones, quarries, and all and singular commodities, jurisdictions, royalties, privileges, franchises, preeminencies, and hereditaments whatsoever, within the said tract; bounds: lands, and islands aforesaid, or to them, or any of them belonging. To have and to hold the same, unto the said Habendum governor and company, their successor, and assigns, forever, upon trust, and for the use and benefit of themselves, and their associates, freemen of the said colony, their heirs and assigns; to be holden of us, our heirs and successors, Tenendum, as of our manor of East Greenwich, in free and common soccage, and not *in capite*, nor by knights service; Yield- Riddendum ing and paying therefore to us, our heirs and successors, only the fifth part of all the ore of gold and silver, which from time to time and all times hereafter, shall be there gotten, had or obtained, in lieu of all services, duties and demands whatsoever, to be to us, our heirs or successors, therefore or thereout rendered, made, or paid. And lastly, we do for us, our heirs and successors, grant to the said governor and company, and their successors, by these presents, that these our letters patents shall be firm, good, and effectual in the law, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever, according to our true intent and meaning herein before declared, as shall be construed, reputed, and adjudged most favourable on the behalf, and for the best benefit and behoof of the said governor and company, and their successors, although express mention, &c. In witness, &c. Witness the King, at Westminster, the three and twentieth day of April,

*Per Breve de Privato Sigillo.*