

and that both understand and delight to promote good discipline and just government among a plain and well intending people. Such persons may find *room in colonies for their good counsel and contrivance*, who are shut out from being of much use or service to great nations under settled customs. These men deserve much esteem, and would be hearkened to. . . .

To conclude, I desire all my dear country folks, who may be inclined to go into those parts, to consider seriously the premises, *as well the present inconveniences as future ease and plenty*, that so none may move rashly or from a fickle but solid mind, *having above all things, as eye to the providence of God, in the disposal of themselves*. And I would further advise all such at least, to have the permission, if not the good liking of their near relations, for that is both natural, and a duty incumbent upon all; and by this means will natural affection be preserved, and a friendly and profitable correspondence be maintained between them. In all which *I beseech Almighty God to direct us, that His blessing may attend our honest endeavor, and then the consequence of all our undertaking will turn to the glory of His great name, and the true happiness of us and our posterity. Amen.*

5. Massachusetts Officials Describe the Outbreak of Witchcraft in Salem, 1692

Mr. Parris had been some years a Minister in Salem-Village, when this sad Calamity (as a deluge) overflowed them, spreading it self far and near: . . .

It was the latter end of February 1691, when divers young Persons belonging to Mr. Parris's Family, and one or more of the Neighbourhood, began to Act, after a strange and unusual manner, *viz.* as by getting into Holes, and creeping under Chairs and Stools, and to use sundry odd Postures and Antick Gestures, uttering foolish, ridiculous Speeches, which neither they themselves nor any others could make sense of; the Physicians that were called could assign no reason for this; but it seems one of them, having recourse to the old shift, told them he was afraid they were Bewitched; upon such suggestions, they that were concerned applied themselves to Fasting and Prayer, which was attended not only in their own private Families, but with calling in the help of others.

March the 11th. Mr. Parris invited several Neighbouring Ministers to join with him in keeping a Solemn day of Prayer at his own House; the time of the exercise those Persons were for the most part silent, but after any one Prayer was ended, they would Act and Speak strangely and Ridiculously, yet were such as had been well Educated and of good Behaviour, the one, a Girl of 11 or 12 years old, would sometimes seem to be in a Convulsion Fit, her Limbs being twisted several ways, and very stiff, but presently her Fit would be over.

A few days before this Solemn day of Prayer, Mr. Parris's Indian Man and Woman made a Cake of Rye Meal, with the Childrens Water, and Baked it in the

"An Impartial Account of the Most Memorable Matters of Fact, Touching the Supposed Witchcraft in New England," in *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases*, George Lincoln Burr (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1914), 341-344.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

7. African Americans Petition for Freedom, 1777

To the Honorable Counsel & House of [Representa]tives for the State of Massachusetts Bay in General Court assembled, Jan. 13, 1777.

The petition of A Great Number of Blackes detained in a State of slavery in the Bowels of a free & Christian Country Humbly sheweth that your Petitioners apprehend that they have in Common with all other men a Natural and Unalienable Right to that freedom which the Great Parent of the Unavers hath Bestowed equally on all mankind and which they have Never forfeited by any Compact or agreement whatever—but they were Unjustly Dragged by the hand of cruel Power from their Dearest friends and sum of them Even torn from the Embraces of their tender Parents—from A populous Pleasant and plentiful contry and in violation of Laws of Nature and of Nations and in defiance of all the tender feelings of humanity Brought [t] here Either to Be sold Like Beast of Burthen & Like them Condemned to Slavery for Life—Among A People Professing the mild Religion of Jesus A people Not Insensible of the Secrets of Reasonable Being Nor without spirit to Resent the unjust endeavours of others to Reduce them to a state of Bondage and Subjection your honours Need not to be informed that A Life of Slavery Like that of your petitioners Deprived of Every social privilege of Every thing Requisite to Render Life Tolerable is far worse then Nonexistence.

[In imitation] of the Lawful Example of the Good People of these States your petitioners have Long and Patiently waited the Event of petition after petition By them presented to the Legislative Body of this state and cannot but with Grief Reflect that their Success hath been but too similar they Cannot but express their Astonishment that It has Never been Considered that Every Principle from which America has Acted in the Course of their unhappy Difficulties with Great Britain Pleads Stronger than A thousand arguments in favours of your petitioners they therefore humbly Beseech your honours to give this petition its due weight & consideration and cause an act of the Legislature to be past whereby they may Be Restored to the Enjoyments of that which is the Natural Right of all men—and their Children who were Born in this Land of Liberty may not be held as Slaves after they arrive at the