

Colonial Laws Taken From Acts & Laws of His Majesty's English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America 1769 (Revised to 1777)

An act for preventing and punishing the stealing of horses.

Be it enacted that whoever shall steal any horse within this colony, and be thereof duly convicted, shall pay and satisfy to the owner of such horse treble the value thereof, and also pay as a fine to the colony treasury the sum of *ten pounds*, (About \$50.00) and be further punished by being publicly whipped on the naked body, not exceeding fifteen stripes, and be confined in a work house or house of correction, not exceeding three months; there to be kept at hard labor, and be further whipped on the first Monday of each month, not exceeding ten stripes each time; and for want of estate wherewith to pay and satisfy such damages and fine, the court before whom such conviction is had, may assign such delinquent in service, so long as they shall judge proper, to the party injured, or his assigns, if he or they will accept thereof, or otherwise to any of His Majesty's subjects.

(1772)

An act for preventing vessels passing through the Rope Ferry (so called) in New London, in the night season.

[*This ferry was pulled across the river by means of a rope that was secured on each bank. Ships passing by at night would cut the rope, hence this law.*]

Whereas travelers are frequently much retarded in their business by the ferry rope over the said ferry being carried away, and the boat going adrift by vessels passing through said ferry in the night season.

Which to prevent:

Be it enacted that no sloop or other vessel shall pass either up or down said river, through said ferry-place, from six o'clock afternoon, until six o'clock in the morning between the first of October and the first of March annually; nor from nine o'clock in the evening until five o'clock in the morning, between the first of March and the first of October annually, without giving notice to the ferryman one hour at least before such vessels shall attempt to pass through said ferry.

Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any master or other commander of any sloop or other vessel, shall be guilty of a breach of this act, he shall forfeit and pay the sum of *forty shillings* (about \$10.00) for every such offence, and one-half to the owner or proprietor of said ferry, the other half to the town treasury of New London.

(1772)

An act in further addition to an act, entitled "An act for the forming and regulating the militia, and for the encouragement of military skill, for the better defense of this colony."

Be it enacted that the towns of Symsbury, New Hartford, Hartland, Barkhemsted and Colebrook shall be one entire regiment, distinguished and called by the name of the *Eighteenth Regiment*, and shall be under the same rules and orders, and have the same powers, privileges and advantages as other regiments in the Colony by law have.

(1774)

An act for prohibiting the importation of Indian, Negro or molatto slaves.

Whereas the increase of slaves in this colony is injurious to the poor, and inconvenient: Be it enacted by the governor that no Indian, Negro or molatto slave shall, at any time hereafter, be brought or imported into this colony, by sea or land, from any place or places whatever, to be disposed of, left or sold within this colony.

Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that any person or persons, who shall hereafter, contrary to the true intent of this act, import or bring any Indian, Negro or molatto slave or slaves into this colony, to be disposed of, left, or sold within the same, or who knowing such slave or slaves to be so imported and brought into this colony, shall receive or purchase them or any of them, shall forfeit and pay to the treasurer of this colony the sum of *One Hundred Pounds* (about \$500.00) lawful money, for every slave so imported, brought into this colony, received or purchased, to be recovered by bill, plaint or information, in any court of record proper to try the same. And that it shall be the duty of all constables and grand jurors to enquire after, and make presentment of all breaches of this act.

(1774)

An act for preventing foreigners trading with, and corrupting the Indians; and carrying on other evil and dangerous designs in this colony.

That it shall not be lawful for any Frenchman, Dutchman, or any subject or vassal of other foreign Prince or state, to trade with any Indian or Indians within the limits of this colony, either directly or indirectly, by themselves or others, upon penalty of the forfeiture of such goods, wares and vessels as shall be found so trading or traded, or the due value thereof; upon due proof made of any goods, wares or merchandises traded; or of any vessel belonging to any such foreigner so trading.

And that if any such foreigners shall be found traveling or straggling about this colony, endeavoring to corrupt the Indians with false, dangerous and seditious principals; and to alienate and estrange their minds from the government; or to search and spy out the country; or if they are suspected of such carrying on, they shall be arrested.

Under the heading of “Capital Crimes” can be found the following:

If any person within the colony shall blaspheme the name of GOD the FATHER, SON, or HOLY GHOST with direct express presumptuous and high handed blasphemy; or shall curse in the like manner, such person shall be put to death.

Historic Bytes

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