



**CHARTER OF KING CHARLES II
OF ENGLAND TO WILLIAM PENN
(MARCH 4, 1681)**

(spelling and usage retained from original document)

CHARLES THE SECOND, BY THE GRACE
OF GOD King of England, Scotland,
France and Ireland, defender of the faith,
&c., To all to whome these presents shall
come GREETING. Whereas our Trustie and
well beloved Subject, William Penn, Esquire,
sonn and heire of Sir William Penn, de-
ceased, out of a commendable desire to
enlarge our English Empire, and promote
such usefull comodities as may bee of
benefitt to us and our Dominions, as alsoe to
reduce the Savage Natives by gentle and just
manners to the love of civill Societie and
Christian Religion hath humbly besought

leave of vs to transport an ample colonie vnto a certaine Countrey hereinafter described in the partes of America not yet cultevated and planted. And hath likewise frumbley besought our Royall majestie to give grant, and confirme all the said countrey with certaine priviledges and Jurisdictions requisite for the good Government and saffie of the said Countrey and Colonie, to him and his heires forever.

[SECTION I*] KNOW YEE, therefore, that wee, favouring the petition and good purpose of the said William Penn, and having regard to the memorie and meritts of his late father, in divers services, and perticulerly to his conduct, courage and discretion vnder our dearest brother, James Duke of Yorke, in that signall battell and victorie, fought and obteyned against the Dutch fleeter comanded by the Heer Van Opdam, in the yeare One thousand six hundred sixtie five, in consideration thereof of our special grace, certaine knowledge and meere motion, Have given and granted, and by this our present Charter, for vs, our heires and sucessors, Doe give and grant unto the said William Penn, his heires and assignes all that tract or parte of land in America, with all the Islands therein conteyned, as the same is bounded on the East by Delaware River, from twelve miles distance, Northwarde of New Castle Towne unto the three and fortieth degree of Northern latitude if the said River doeth extend soe

*The section numbers noted above do not appear in the original document. They were assigned by the Provincial Council in 1685 to facilitate reference.

farre Northwards; but if the said River shall not extend soe farre Northward, then by the said River soe farr as it cloth extend, and from the head of the said River the Easterne bounds are to bee determined by a meridian line, to bee drawn from the head of the said River vnto the said three and fortieth degree, the said lands to extend Westwards, five degrees in longitude, to bee computed from the said Easterne Bounds, and the said lands to bee bounded on the North, by the beginning of the three and fortieth degree of Northern latitude, and on the south, by a circle drawne at twelve miles, distance from New Castle Northwards, and Westwards vnto the begining of the fortieth degree of Northerne Latitude; and then by a streight line Westwards, to the limit of Longitude above menconed. **[SECTION II]** WEE DOE alsoe give and grant vnto the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, the free and vndisturbed vse, and continuance in and passage into and out of all and singular Ports, harbours, Bayes, waters, rivers, Isles and Inletts, belonging vnto or leading to and from the Countrey, or Islands aforesaid; and all the soyle, lands, fields, woods, vnderwoods, mountaines, hills, fenns, Isles, Lakes, Rivers, waters, rivuletts, Bays and Inletts, scituate or being within or belonging vnto the Limitts and Bounds aforesaid together with the fishing of all sortes of fish, whales, sturgeons, and all Royall and other fishes in the sea, bayes, Inletts, waters or Rivers, within the premises, and the fish therein taken, and alsoe all veines, mines and quarries, as well discovered as not discovered, of Gold, Silver, Gemms and pretious Stones, and all other whatsoever, stones, metalls, or of any other thing or

matter whatsoever, found or to bee found within the Countrey, Isles, or Limitts aforesaid; [SECTION III] and him the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, WEE DOE, by this our Royall Charter, for vs, our heires and successors, make, create and constitute the true and absolute proprietaries of the Countrey aforesaid, and of all other, the premises, saving always to vs, our heires and successors, the faith and allegiance of the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, and of all other, the proprietaries tenants and Inhabitants that are, or shall be within the Territories and precincts aforesaid; and saving alsoe vnto vs, our heires and Successors, the Sovereignty of the aforesaid Countrey, TO HAVE, hold and possesse and enjoy the said tract of Land, Countrey, Isles, Inletts and other the premises, vnto the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, to the only proper vse and behoofe of the said William Penn, his heirs and assignes forever. To bee holden of vs, our heires and Successors, Kings of England, as of our Castle of Windsor, in our County of Berks, in free and comon socage by fealty only for all services, and not in Capite or by Knights service, Yeelding and paying therefor to us, our heires and Successors, two Beaver Skins to bee delivered att our said Castle of Windsor, on the first day of January, in every yeare; and also the fifth parte of all Gold and silver Oare, which shall from time to time happen to bee found within the Limitts aforesaid, cleare of all charges, and of our further grace certaine knowledge and meere mocon, wee have thought fit to Erect, and wee doe hereby Erect the aforesaid Countrey and Islands, into a province and Seigniorie, and doe call itt Pensilvania, and soe from hence-

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forth wee will have itt called, [SECTION IV] and forasmuch as wee have hereby made, and ordeyned the aforesaid William Penn, his heires and assignes, the true and absolute Proprietaries of all the Lands and Dominions aforesaid. KNOW YEE therefore that wee reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelitie, wisdom, justice and provident circumspeccon of the said William Penn, for vs, our heires and successors, Doe grant free, full and absolute power, by vertue of these presents to him and his heirs and to his and their Deputies, and Lieutenants, for the good and happy government of the said Countrey, to ordeyne, make, enact and vnder his and their Seales to publish any Lawes whatsoever, for the raising of money for the publick vse of the said province, or for any other end apperteyning either vnto the publick state peace, or safety of the said Countrey, or vnto the private vtility of particular persons, according vnto their best discretions, by and with the advice, assent and approbacon of the freemen of the said Countrey, or the greater parte of them, or of their Delegates or Deputies, whom for the Enacting of the said Lawes, when, and as often as need shall require. WEE WILL, that the said William Penn, and his heires shall assemble in such sort and forme as to him and them shall seeme best, and the same lawes duely to execute vnto, and upon all people within the said Countrey and limitts thereof; [SECTION V] and WEE doe likewise give and grant unto the said William Penn, and his heires and to his and their Deputies and Lieutenants, such power and authorities to appoint and establish any Judges, and Justices, magistrates and officers whatsoever for what causes soever, for the probates of

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with and for the granting of administracons within the precincts aforesaid, and with what power soever, and in such forme as to the said William Penn, or his heiress shall seeme most convenient. Alsoe to remitt, release, pardon and abolish, whether fbefore Judgement or after, all crimes and offences, whatsoever committed within the said Countrey, against the said Lawes, treason and wilful and malicious murder onely excepted; and in those cases, to grant repleives untill our pleasure may bee knowne therein, and to doe, all and every other thing and things which vnto the compleate establishment of usfice vnto Courts and Tribunalls, formes of Judicature and manner of proceedings doe belong, altho' in these presents expresse mencon bee not made thereof; and by Judges by them delegated to award processes hold pleas and determine in all the said Courts and Tribunalls, all acons, sūits and causes whatsoever, as well crminall as civill, personall, reall and mixt, which Lawes soe as aforesaid, to bee published, Our pleasure is, and soe Wee enjoyne require and comand shall bee most absolute and avaylable in law, and that all the Liege people and Subjects of vs, our heires and successors, doe observe and keepe the same inviolable in those parts, soe farr as they concerne them, vnder the paine therein expressed, or to bee expressed. Provided; Nevertheles, that the said Lawes bee consonant to reason, and bee not repugnant or contrarie, but as neere as conveniently may bee agreeable to the Lawes, statutes and rights of this our Kingdome of England, and saveing and reserving to vs, our heires and successors, the receiving, heareing and determining of

the appeale and appeales, of all or any person or persons, of, in or belonging to the territories aforesaid, or touching any Judgement to bee there made or given.

[SECTION VI] —And forasmuch as in the Government of soe great a Countrey, sudden accidents doe often happen, whereunto itt will bee necessarie to apply a remedie before the freeholders of the said Province, or their Delegates or Deputies can bee assembled to the makeing of Lawes neither will itt be convenient that instantly vpon every such emergent occasion, soe greate a multitude should be called together. Therefore, for the better Government of the said Countrey, WEE WILL, and ordeyne, and by these presents for vs, our heires and successors, Doe grant vnto the said William Penn and his heires, by themselves or by their magistrates and officers, in that behalfe, duely to bee ordeyned as aforesaid, to make and constitute, fit and wholesome ordinances from time to time within the said Countrey, to bee kept and observed as well for the preservacon of the peace, as for the better government of the people there inhabiting, and publickly to notifie the same, to all persons whome the same doeth or any way may concerne, which ordinances our will and pleasure is, shall be observed inviolably within the said Province, vnder paines therein to bee expressed, soe as the said ordinances bee consonant to reason and bee not repugnant nor contrary, but soe tarre as conveniently may bee agreeable with the Lawes of our kingdome of England, and soe as the said ordinances be not extended in any sort to bind, charge or take away the right or interest- of any person or persons, for or in their life, members,

William Penn and his heires, as to all others who shall from time to time repaire vnto the said Countrey, with a purpose to inhabitt there, or to trade with the natives of the said Countrey, full license to lade and freight in any Ports whatsoever of vs, our heires and successors, according to the lawes made, or to be made within our kingdome of England, and into the said Countrey, by them, their servants or assignes, to transport all and singular their wares, goods and merchandizes, as likewise, all sorts of graine whatsoever, and all other things whatsoever necessary for food or cloathing, not phibited by the lawes and Statutes of our kingdomes and Dominions, to be carryed out of the said kingdomes without any lett or molestacon of vs, our heires and successors, or of any the officers of vs, our heires and successors, . saveing alwayes to vs, our heires and successors, the legall impositions, customes and other duties and payments for the said wares and merchandise, by any law or statute due or to be due to vs, our heires and successors. [SECTION X] AND WEE DOE further for vs, our heirs and Successors, give and grant vnto the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, free and absolute power to Divide the said Countrey, and Islands, into Townes, Hundreds and Counties, and to erect and incorporate Townes into Borroughs, and Borroughs into Citties, and to make and constitute ffaires and marketts therein, with all other convenient privileges and immunities according to the meritt of the inhabitants, and the ffines of the places; & to doe all and every other thing and things touching the premises which to him or them shall seeme requisite, and meet, albeit they be such as of their

owne nature might otherwise require a more especiall comandment and warrant, then in these presents is expressed. [SECTION XI] WEE WILL ALSOE, and by these presents for vs, our heires and successors, WEE doe give and grant licence by this our charter, vnto the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, and to all inhabitants and dwellers in pvince aforesaid, both present, and to come to import or vnlade by themselves or their Servants, ffactors or assignes, all merchandizes and goods whatsoever, that shall arise of the fruites and comodities of the said province, either by Land or Sea, into any of the Ports of vs, our heires and successors, in our kingdome of England, and not into any other countrey whatsoever. And WEE give him full power to dispose of the said goods in the said ports, and if need bee within one yeare next after the unladeing of the same, to lade the said merchandizes and goods again into the same or other shippes, and to export the same into any other Countreys, either of our Dominions or fforreigne, according to lawe: PROVIDED alwayes, that they pay such, customes and imposicons, subsidies and duties for the same to vs, our heires and successors, as the rest of our subiects of our kingdome of England, for the time being shall be bound to pay, and doe observe the acts of Navigation and other lawes in that behalfe made. [SECTION XII] AND FURTHERMORE, of our more ample and especiall grace, certain knowledge and meere motion, WEE DOE, for vs, our heires and successors, Grant vnto the said William Penn, his heires and assignes, full and absolute power and authorities to make, erect and constitute within the said province, and the Isles and